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[MUTUAL RECRIMINATION.]

THE GOLDEN MASK.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Stranger's Secret," "Man and His Idol," "The Seventh Marriage," "The Warning Voice," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE LAST BARRIER GONE.

Fool! Join not madness to mistake;
Then knowest she loved thee not a whit;
Only that she thy heart might break—
She wanted it.

Only the conquered thing to chain
So fast that none might set it free,
No other woman there might reign,
And comfort thee.

Jean Ingelow.

The wan, sickly glare which in town passes for sunshine served to expose to the worst effect the dusty shabbiness of a second floor apartment in Russell Square.

It was eleven o'clock in the morning and the round table in the middle of the room was laid for breakfast.

The cloth was ragged and dingy, the breakfast things made up of contributions from several services, the knives badly cleaned, the spoons and forks revealed their electro-plated nature in hopeless yellowness; in short, everything was in keeping with the pretentious wretchedness of a London lodging-house of the most hateful kind.

Breakfast was laid for two.

And there were indications of its being laid with unwonted care, for in the centre of the table was an ornament, which consisted of a great, stringy, stalky, seedy nosegay, in a cracked jug without a handle, from which the water leaked in a line across the table-cloth. There was also an urn of dingy aspect, but great pretension, that might have passed for silver at night, but was unmistakably base and coppery in the sunshine. A lop-sided toast-rack of the same material, wanting two of the knobs which should have supported it, aided the general elegant effect.

The sun had shone into this apartment long enough to change the butter in a cracked glass dish on the

table into oil, and to take toll of the colour of anything in the room that had colour in it to yield up, when two persons hastily entered, talking as they came.

The one first presenting herself was Margaret Gath.

HIDEOUS to look at in her strange affliction at all times she showed to singular disadvantage in the morning light. The corpse-white complexion then assumed a yellowish tint, while her eyes were surrounded by circles of deep purple, giving them the effect of being sunk far into the head. A brilliant magenta dressing-gown in which she now appeared did not relieve, but only heightened the startling and unpleasant effect by the force of strong contrast.

Following her at a few paces distance came the man whom she sometimes called her brother, sometimes her husband, and who, whatever his relationship, was an outrage and disgrace to it.

Abel Gath's appearance was still clerical. Probably it would have been whatever attire he had appeared in, just as a military man's military though in a civilian's garb. But as he came puffing and panting into the room, with his face swollen, and blotched; the long strings of hair straying over his forehead, his white necktie soiled and crumpled, and his black suit bearing the appearance of having been slept in, he hardly presented an aspect of which his clerical brethren might have been proud.

"If I have played my hand badly," said Margaret sullenly, as they came in, "you have no right to sneer at me. The cards were not too brilliant."

"Sneer!" cried the other, in a voice husky from hard drinking over night. "Who sneers? Not I. But I want money, and money I must have."

"That you may kill yourself with drink?" cried Margaret, bitterly.

"Yes, if I choose."

"As, heaven be thanked! you are sure to. And then perhaps there may be some hope for me. Alone I may rise into a higher sphere; but how can I hope to drag up your dead weight? Oh, I must have been mad when I linked my fate to yours. What could I hope or expect? Not that you would ever survive

the disgrace of your expulsion from the church. No that you would ever become less a libertine, less besotted, less brutal—mad! mad! I could have been nothing less than mad!"

"Not altogether, I fancy," the other retorted with a sneer. "There was a little, just a little method in the madness. I seem to recollect having you in my power to an unpleasant degree, as I have a glimmering fancy that you had to choose between me and the gallows. Am I wrong?"

"Better the gallows—better death at once," cried the woman petulantly.

"You didn't think so then," was the reply, "you didn't think so when your husband lay dead in the Moat at the bottom of the eighty-one stone steps. But come; all this is folly—all past, all done with."

"What! Have the consequences ceased?"

"No! nor ever will."

"And you think it nothing that I should be doomed to spend my life like this—and with you!"

The bitterest contempt pointed the last words.

"With you!" she repeated.

The wretched man—he had already begun to feed at the table—looked up, his bloated face purple with suppressed passion.

"Leave me, why not leave me?" he said.

"Leave you?"

"Ay. Try another rise, a second presentation. In all your madness nothing so mad as the."

"Because it failed. Failure meets no sympathy. But had I succeeded? Had I put the Court stamp on my newly-plated reputation, and worked my way into the circles I aimed at—what then? Even you do not doubt but that I would have made my way and held my own. It was a last chance—a brilliant chance; it failed, and there's an end."

The sound of carriage wheels stopping in the street below caused the speaker to stop, and both she and her companion looked towards the window eagerly.

A light step on the stairs was soon heard, and then a visitor entered, unannounced.

It was Fabian Temple.

He was radiant. His attire was new, light and fashionable, his gloves faultless, the hat he carried in



his hand bright and glossy. A camellia, red and white, glowed in his button-hole. The dress, too, was in keeping with the man. His eyes glistened; his cheeks were flushed, and his whole manner was full of buoyancy and excitement.

The first sight of the individuals he had come to visit caused him a momentary shock, but he soon recovered his self-possession.

"You are breakfasting? I disturb you?" he said.

"Not at all," replied Abel Gath. "Will you join us?"

"Thanks, no—I rise ridiculously early and breakfast, I might say with the lark, if larks breakfasted in town. Will you pardon my proceeding to business at once?"

He addressed the man; but his eyes rested on Margaret.

She bowed.

"Well then," he said, "to be brief, the matter lies in a small compass. After that terrible affair of the presentation, Lady Edith declines to move in this matter farther. She owes it to her kinswoman, Lady Dalkoth, not to do so. And it is unnecessary. It is sufficient that I am satisfied of the illegality of my marriage, and that I am placed in a position to satisfy the earl on that point also. You on your part are prepared to give me the proof of what you have asserted that the marriage was informal."

Abel Gath's cunning eyes glistened like those of a toad as he answered:

"That there is no proof of its formality."

Fabian's countenance fell.

"But of its informality?" he asked.

"It depends on whether we can come to terms," was the reply.

"That is a different thing," Fabian said.

"In theory—yes. Practically—no."

"But you forget, my own feelings."

The man smiled.

"No: I think not," he replied. "They will not be greatly lacerated, it is to be hoped."

Margaret turned a reproachful look towards the speaker, but he did not or would not notice it.

"Come to consider of it," he went on, "there's no great difference. Where a man's made up his mind to throw off his wife on a legal law—a mere informality—it can't hurt him much to make it up a little farther, and throw her off because she has no power to make him keep her on. It comes to the same thing."

"No," replied Fabian, promptly, "it does not come to the same thing. It is not the same thing; but something quite different. A man has a right to avail himself of a legal law—"

"And a right to avail himself of a chance thrown in his way. A lawyer would."

"But I am not speaking as a lawyer. I am speaking as a man, with a heart, with a conscience, and a sense of right and wrong which he cannot afford to outrage."

The man smiled, a sinister smile, that puckered up his mouth and gave a hideous leer to his eyes.

"You think I am dead to all this feeling?" Fabian demanded.

"I should have thought so, certainly," was the reply.

"And you would have been mistaken, as you have from the first. You thought it likely? Yes; your trap has been well laid. You have lured me on by a specious representation till I have committed myself past withdrawal. You suffered me to believe that I was a free man—that my wife was no more to me than your sister here. And now—"

"Now, it comes to this," the other interrupted, "you would have acted a cruel and unmanly part towards a simple trusting woman, who had blindly trusted in the legality of the ceremony which, as she believed, made her your wife. You would have done this because some flaw, some informality, gave you the chance of acting like a scoundrel."

"Abel!" cried Margaret in a warning tone.

"I care not," he cried, "tis the truth, and I can afford to speak it. Put the mere legal quibble aside, Fabian Temple, and in what worse position do you stand than that in which you were ready to place yourself. Put the case as it looks in the eyes of heaven, and where's the difference? Had I told you there was some ritualistic error—some question as to canonical hours or requisite witnesses—you would have abandoned your wife without a quail. Now, then, I tell you that if I choose—that is, if you are content to pay my price—an essential of a valid marriage—the means of proving its validity—will be wanting, what is the difference? Wherein is your position altered?"

"Can you ask this?" cried Fabian, hotly. "Is not that for which you demanded a price deficient in value compared to what I had a right to expect? You promise me proofs of an informal marriage, and in place of that you offer to suppress the evidence of one that

is formal and regular. Is this one and the same thing?"

"You decline our offer then?" exclaimed Margaret Gath, interposing with a question at once to the point.

Fabian hesitated.

His colour came and went, and it was obvious that a struggle was going on in his mind.

"You only mock me," he said, at length, "you know your power."

"We may to business, then?" the disgraced clergyman asked.

An inclination of the head was the answer.

"Good," returned Gath, acknowledging it. "The matter stands simply thus. Three persons were witnesses of your marriage. I, who performed it, am competent to speak to it. So is Margaret here who chanced to be present. The old Frenchman who had charge of the little Protestant chapel in which we met that windy March morning is in his grave. Margaret and I therefore have alone the power of speaking; the capacity for being silenced."

"But what guarantee have I that I have really bought your silence? How do I know that if quieted now you will not speak out, when your doing so would be even more disastrous to me?"

"My dear sir," the other replied, "I anticipated that question and am prepared for it. You are a prudent man and will not part with your money without a receipt."

"A receipt?"

"Clearly. See, I have it here, and this will surely satisfy your objections."

As he spoke he produced a little leathern-covered volume, brown and shining with use. At the sight of it Fabian's eyes glistened.

It was clear that he had seen it before and recognized it.

"This," said Gath, deliberately, "is the register of the parish in which you were married. It contains an entry of that event in your own handwriting. I will show it you. Ah, I see you are curious to know how I became possessed of this? I will tell you. It was in consequence of a charge brought against me in that village that I was expelled the church. I revenged myself. In flying from the place I carried with me every record of value, and it was a coincidence that within six months the little church was destroyed by fire. It was a coincidence, wasn't it?"

The very soul of the listener sickened at the malignant looks with which these suggestive words were accompanied.

"As I have said," Gath proceeded, without waiting for an answer, "this book contains the register of your marriage. I will give it you in return for your money—it shall be my receipt. Possessed of that, you have the only proof of your marriage in your own hands."

"Give it me," cried Fabian, eagerly.

"You forgot—one little form has first to be gone through," said Gath.

"Ah, yes; the money? You need that?"

"Precisely."

Without hesitation Fabian drew from a side-pocket a roll of notes, with which he had evidently come prepared, and handed them over. Margaret Gath's keen eyes watched while they were carefully examined and counted over on the ragged cloth of the breakfast-table. And it was her lips which first pronounced the words, "Right, quite right," which Abel Gath promptly echoed.

Then he tore the leaf from the register and handed it over.

"Your receipt," he said.

Fabian snatched at it, and advancing to the open window through which the sun was shining with an intensified brightness, tore the leaf across and across and scattered it into the street below.

"So I break down the last barrier that separates me from Edith," he mentally exclaimed.

Then, eager to be gone he took his leave.

Almost as he emerged from the door a brougham passed, and directly after a head was thrust from the window of it, and a voice shouted his name.

"Is that you, Temple? Jump in, I have something to say to you."

He caught those words almost before he recognized the speaker. A moment afterwards he was sitting face to face with Ewen Ascott, the Silverthorpe lawyer.

CHAPTER XLIX.

DESPERATION.

One little word, and I had spared him then:
One kindly glance, one pressure of the hand,
But to be told my love was but my shame!—
Woman could not endure it.

EWEN ASCOTT was hardly himself. His face was paler than usual and had a worn and anxious expression about it.

There was, moreover, or Fabian Temple fancied so, a singularity in his manner,—something unusual which was hardly reserve. It might rather be called avoidance or shrinking, very peculiar in a man who has just asked another into his carriage.

"I am going to the earl's," the lawyer said, after a moment's hesitation, "you are probably taking the same direction?"

Fabian assented.

"By the way, I have had another application about that house of yours at Silverthorpe," said Ascott.

"Are you resolved not to let it?"

"Quite."

"And you have actually bought and paid for it, with no other view than to let it stand empty?"

"No other."

"But it will tumble to pieces."

"Not if I keep it in repair."

"Nonsense! I didn't believe you were half so romantic."

Here for a moment the subject dropped. Profound silence ensued. Each was occupied with thoughts suggested by what had just passed, and it seemed as if those thoughts were of a painful nature.

It was again the lawyer who first spoke.

"I learn from the earl that the negotiations for your marriage with his daughter are going on?"

"Yes."

"In spite of the difficulties of the case?"

"Difficulties!"

"I allude to your wife, Temple, for one."

Fabian burst into a forced laugh.

"So you are one of the duped, are you?" he asked.

"You know me as a man of the world, and you think it likely that I would thrust my neck into a noose for a woman's sake? My wife indeed! Where was there ever a frail unfortunate who did not delight in giving herself that name? I believe women never thoroughly appreciate the name of wife until they have forfeited all chance of bearing it."

"Well, let us take another part of the question," said Ascott, seriously; "I know the position of the earl's affairs as well as you do. I know, as you know, that this marriage is an affair of money, not of affection—on the lady's side, at least: she obeyed her father, whose object is to secure a son-in-law who will not call him to account for his arrears and past extravagances, and will be able to supply him with resources in time to come. This being so, the first question will be as to the settlements. Now, how are you prepared to deal with that?"

He fixed a close and scrutinizing gaze on the face of the young man as he spoke.

"How?" Fabian asked.

"Hang it, man!" cried the irascible lawyer, "the question is a simple one. You know on what you are relying for your own resources at this moment. On the credulity of money-lenders!"

"Who insist on good security, credulous as they are."

"The security of David Hyde's deeds and leases, with which you are dealing in an unauthorized, and I may call it, a felonious manner."

Temple's cheek flushed.

"You forget that I am his heir," he said, swallowing his anger as best he might.

"No; I only remember that even the heir has no power to deal with the estate while the death of the testator is open to question. Now you are acting as if you knew that David Hyde was dead. Do you know it?"

"How should I—what means have I of ascertaining a fact of which there is no evidence?" the other faltered.

"I did not ask you that question," said Ascott.

"But enough. I did not expect a fair, straightforward answer. I had no right to look for that."

"You have no right to expect any other," cried Fabian, indignantly; "in one word—I know nothing of Hyde's fate. How should I? But I am not fool enough to suppose that he lives, nor have I any reason to doubt that proof of his death will be forthcoming."

"You have no reason to doubt that?"

"None. This fellow Copley has already confessed enough to put the question beyond a doubt. If he lives there is nothing to prevent his giving the particulars of his crime."

"Describing the place in which the body is concealed, for instance?"

Fabian hesitated one moment, and only one.

"Exactly," he then said; "and that will end all, you know!"

"Yes. That—will—end—all."

The conversation stopped.

The brougham was at the earl's door.

As the coachman descended from his box, Fabian looked out, and observed that their arrival was apparently watched with keen anxiety—waited for, as it appeared—by the detestable Doctor Vosper.

He was pacing to and fro on the top step of the

flight leading to the door, and his attire was as gay, as fresh and marriage-like as that of his detested rival. It had been selected in imitation of it, even to the flower in the button-hole, and Fabian could not repress a smile, in spite of his annoyance, as he beheld this caricature of himself.

"Is his lordship in?" he demanded of the dwarf brusquely.

"Oh, yes. Pray walk up. And my lady, she is in also."

He bowed with mock courtesy as he spoke. Then he turned and looked up at the lawyer. Their eyes met with a glance of intelligence, and all entered the house together.

His lordship was in the Florentine Gallery—so called from the pictures hanging in it—and thither a servant in livery led the way. It was a long, narrow room, and the curtains drawn to keep the glare of the sun from the pictures rendered it dark to those coming in out of the light.

But it was not long before Fabian Temple's eyes became accustomed to the gloom; and as they did so he perceived with surprise that the earl, whose height and silvery hair rendered him at once conspicuous, was not alone.

His lordship sat at a table, with a stranger on his right hand. On his left, where the gloom was denser than elsewhere, some one occupied a seat on the sofa. It was a woman, for her garments trailed on the floor. It was a woman overcome, and crouching down under the weight of mental or bodily anguish.

He had barely time to ask himself who this might be—the Lady Edith his heart told him—when a white face was suddenly raised, and confronted him.

It was Hilda: the wife whom he had just secured the power to divorce.

"Your wife, Temple?" said the earl, coldly.

"You are jesting, my lord," he replied with a defiant air.

"I trust not, for your own sake."

"You are kind. May I ask why?"

"Because, if what you say is true, I am afraid you will repent it."

"Again I am at a loss to understand—"

The stranger who sat on the earl's right hand interrupted.

"A word will enlighten you, sir," he exclaimed.

"If the lady is not your wife I shall be compelled to take a certain statement she is prepared to make as evidence against you. If, on the other hand, she is entitled to the relationship she claims, her lips are sealed. A wife cannot give evidence against her husband."

Fabian glanced towards the sofa. His eyes, now grown accustomed to the gloom, saw there a face perfectly rigid and colourless, eyes that burned deep in their sockets, a heaving bosom, clasped hands—a figure, in fact, writhing, quivering with suppressed emotions.

An instant's reflection enabled him to come to a determination.

Already he had weighed the consequences of all that Hilda might be able to advance against him. Already he had decided in his own mind that she was powerless to harm him, since at the best she could offer nothing but surmise, suspicion, and the inventions of a feeble intellect, to which vindictiveness might have lent an uncustomed force.

Reviewing those consequences in that passing moment, he saw but one path open to him, that of persisting in the course on which he had determined.

"I have nothing to fear," he said, calmly.

At those words Hilda sprang to her feet.

"Is that your answer, Fabian?" she cried out.

"Think now, for the last time, think what it is you are saying, and to what this will lead. For the last time, for when next you speak I may be powerless to save: I can do nothing but denounce and destroy you. What demon is this that urges you on to your destruction? Why? Heaven help you!—why will you change the love that is in my heart to gall and bitterness, and make me the instrument of His vengeance upon your misdeeds? I love you! With every pulse of my heart, with every fibre of my being, I love you! I would shield you, save you, give my life for yours. And you—blinded, infatuated in your wickedness, you anger me to madness, exasperate me beyond the power of endurance or control, heap wrong, and insult, and perfidy and baseness upon my head, till I abhorred at the thing you make me—till I shrink, terror-stricken, from the course I follow—loathe, detest, abhor myself, and still sink, sink powerless into the abyss of horror into which it is your will that I should drag you down. Your will, Fabian, it is your will. A word might save you—a word, a tender look, an act of right or justice—and you refuse. You turn from me. Your eyes are cold. Your heart and your lips spurn me. It is you who drive me to desperation, and on your head be the consequences. Had you made me a better Christian I could endure and forgive. But not now—not now—I only know that I suffer and have

the power of redress. I only know that you are cruel and pitiless, and that I can avenge myself in the sacred name of justice. IN THAT NAME I DENOUNCE YOU AS THE MURDERER OF DAVID HYDE!"

In the utterance of these words she fell forward her full length upon the ground.

The power which had inspired her so far departed. The effort that had dictated these words proved utterly exhausting. The crisis had come. She had been equal to it, and now that all was over, exhaustion and prostration followed.

"You hear?" exclaimed the stranger, who sat by the earl's side, addressing Fabian Temple. "You hear this charge?"

"I do; and at the proper time and in the proper place I shall be prepared to meet it."

He turned on his heel as he spoke, his face expressive of anger and contempt.

Even Ascott laid a hand on his shoulder.

"This flippancy will not save you, Temple," he said.

"You have played a bold and daring part, and have carried matters with a high hand; but you do this with impunity no longer. All is known. What that poor woman, your unfortunate wife, has stated is the solemn truth—as you know."

"No!" cried the accused, fiercely. "No! As heaven is my witness, I swear that she has given utterance to a wicked lie—a base and wicked lie. I am innocent of this monstrous accusation!"

The lawyer dropped his hand and turned from him with a reproachful glance.

"There is but one excuse for you," he said; "a man will imperil his soul to save his life. It's human nature to do it, and I ought not to be surprised."

The stranger interposed.

"It is only right that Mr. Temple should know the evidence given before me," he said. "He may not be aware, by the way," he added, "that I am a magistrate acting in this matter at the request of my friend the earl, who was naturally anxious that the preliminary inquiry should, if possible, be conducted so as to avoid the scandal of public proceedings. I have before me two depositions. I will read them."

"As you please," said the accused, haughtily, and, drawing himself erect as he stood, holding his hat in one hand, and drumming on it with the fingers of the other, he prepared to listen.

CHAPTER L.

THE DOUBLE ACCUSATION.

To sum all
In one wild name—a name the pale air freezes at,
And every cheek of man sinks in with horror—
Thou art a cold and midnight murderer.

Milman.

THE magistrate bridged his nose with a pair of gold glasses, suspended from his neck by a broad watered-silk ribbon, and prepared himself to read.

"This," he said, taking up one of two folded papers lying on the table before him, "is the deposition of Hilda Temple:

"I am the lawful wife of Fabian Temple. We have been married six years. I remember the night of the eighteenth of June last. My husband was busily engaged upon some work which had occupied him some days, and we sat up late into the night. Twelve had passed when we were startled by a sound in the street below. It was a cry—a sharp, piteous cry. When we heard it Fabian went down. It was in consequence of the cry that he went. It might have been the cry of a person alarmed—or attacked: I cannot say which."

"She cannot say which," the accused repeated, as if to himself.

"He was absent some time," the deposition went on. "During that time I heard nothing; but growing alarmed I went to the door to call out and ascertain what had happened. To my astonishment the door was locked! I listened. I called aloud my husband's name, again and again, but there was no response. Again I listened, and a strange—peculiar sound—reached my ears. It was that of some one digging and throwing up loose earth. When it at length ceased a fresh sound succeeded it,—that of a creeping, stealthy step upon the stairs. Noiseless as it was, I recognized that step as my husband's. It was followed by the cautious unlocking of the door, and then he presented himself before me. The appearance he presented at that moment filled me with terror. His face was pale, his eyes wild, drops of perspiration stood on his brow, and he trembled. I inquired what had happened? He answered 'Nothing!' Alarmed, I scrutinized his appearance yet more closely. Then I saw that there was blood upon his clothes and hands, and upon the wristbands of his shirt. As I noted this, he asked for water, and it had no sooner been handed to him than he started from it, declaring that it was tinged with blood."

"Monstrous!" cried the listener, as this passage

was reached: "is every idle fancy, every creation of an over-worked, over-excited brain to be made the pretext for taking away a man's life?"

"That will be an argument for the defence," said the magistrate.

And he resumed his reading.

"Again I enquired what had occurred—what had detained and alarmed him so much? In reply, he informed me that the cry we had heard had proceeded from an elderly man, who had been set upon by ruffians, struck down and left for dead, but who had sufficiently recovered to proceed upon his way. Even in that moment I doubted him. Something in his manner and in the tone of his voice convinced me that his object was to deceive and to baffle enquiry. With this impression on my mind I soon after retired; but I was not satisfied, and I thought I would return and express my misgivings; I did return a few steps, and through the half-opened door I saw that he was bending over a paper that had not formed part of those on which he had been engaged. It was a large sheet folded in a long, narrow form, and he was perusing it with avidity. As he stood close to the lamp, with the strong glare of light falling upon the paper, I saw distinctly a blood-smear upon the back of it: the light was so strong that I could not be mistaken. I afterwards saw the will of David Hyde as found at his house—and identified it as the paper I had seen my husband produce from his breast that night."

Even Ascott stepped forward.

"It is here," he said, handing in a paper, "this is the will, and see here is the blood smear on the back of it."

He pointed to what looked like a smear of red ink hastily made with the finger or thumb.

"That is a blood mark, you are sure of that?" the earl asked.

"I am quite sure. It has been subjected to chemical analysis, and the result shows that it is blood, not ink, and further, that it is human blood."

"Is it possible to determine that?"

"Certainly it is: the atoms or globules which go to make up the blood vary in arrangement in all animals, and a knowledge of the appearances they present under the microscope in the case of men, oxen, sheep, pigs, birds, and so on, enables the chemist to speak with certainty on such a point. This is human blood."

The magistrate resumed his reading:

"Something in Fabian's face, in his eyes, alarmed me. I dared not venture into his presence again. I saw him read on and on, then throw himself back into his chair in an ecstasy of excitement, and, daring to stay no longer, I withdrew. An hour afterwards Fabian joined me. He was still excited and feverish, and during that night he did not once close his eyes. I knew that, for I was too terrified to sleep, though I pretended to do so. In the morning we were startled by a crowd in the street, and I then learned, for the first time, that there were traces of bloodshed, and that David Hyde had left his home overnight and was missing. I learned this from his daughter's lips. She had come out in search of her father, and was persuaded to accept the shelter of our roof, until it was sufficiently late for her to proceed farther to make inquiries. While she remained there one or two things happened to confirm my suspicions of foul play on the part of my husband. In answer to a question he stated that he was not sitting up sufficiently late to know what had happened under our windows, and that he did not know what had happened there. More than this, he, at that interview stated, for the first time, what he has since steadily persisted in, that David Hyde was his friend and benefactor, whereas, as far as my knowledge went, he was only his employer. Nor were they at all on intimate terms, as Hyde was close and miserly, and showed his disposition in all his dealings with Fabian, who never lost an opportunity of speaking in Hyde's disfavour. This unfounded statement confirmed my suspicions that something wrong had happened in the night. I was the more convinced of it by Fabian's manner of leaving the house by the side door, in a shrinking, timid manner as if he was afraid to face the crowd in front of the house."

Up to this point Fabian had listened with growing impatience. Here he could restrain himself no longer.

"Was it to listen to this tissue of surmises, hints, and deductions that I am detained?" he asked, with a sneer.

"Have patience, sir," replied the magistrate, "you will have no cause to complain of the weakness of the evidence before it is concluded."

Then he resumed.

"As the days wore on, Fabian's manner filled me with increased alarm. He neither slept nor ate, and I saw that something was preying on his mind and telling upon his health. Everything that happened served to convince me of this. It was not long before he informed me that he had

bought the house in which we lived at Silverthorpe for no other purpose than to have it closed up, and I ascertained that he expended the first money he could succeed in raising in this reckless expenditure, while he could only justify on the ground of its being a fancy or sentiment. About the same time—before we had quitted the house—a circumstance occurred with respect to some keys which occasioned me great uneasiness. I found a ring of keys not belonging to us, and when I enquired whence they had come, he hesitated, and at last ventured to surmise that they must have been left by his lawyer, Mr. Ewen Ascott, during a visit he paid to the house. I then proposed to have them sent to Mr. Ascott—a suggestion met with anger, and eventually he took charge of the keys, and I never saw them again.

"So much for the mystery of the keys," cried Fabian Temple, scornfully.

"You are curious to penetrate the mystery further," said Ascott.

"Not I," was the indifferent answer.

"Because if you were, I could inform you that those keys—identified by the witness—have been found hidden behind the wainscot of a room in your house, and that they are ascertained to be those of David Hyde. Moreover, they are known to have been in his possession when he quitted his house on the night of the supposed murder to go over to Silverthorpe."

For the first time the accused changed colour, and his bearing obviously altered. There was a perceptible quivering of the under lip that told its tale of agitation and secret misgiving.

"You have evidence of this?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Ascott, "the best of evidence."

"Whose?"

"My own."

"It is not usual for a lawyer to volunteer to enter the witness box," Fabian sneered.

"No; but this is not an ordinary case. David Hyde was my friend and client: his adopted son was as dear to me, as a boy, as my own son could have been. And when I see my friend perishing by foul means and his son falsely accused of another's crime, it's time for me to speak out."

"The boy has confessed the crime," said the other bluntly.

"No. The confession set down as his is no confession at all. Merely the blundering act of two women, one eager to pocket money, the other too much prostrated and overcome to know what she was doing."

"Ridiculous!" cried Fabian, "there are the very words confessing his guilt."

"Not so; and if there were—if in a moment of fever and delirium he had proclaimed himself guilty, I could still have maintained his innocence. I have the best possible grounds for doing so."

"The best reason?"

"Yes, since I have proof positive of your guilt."

Fabian gazed at him incredulously.

"Let me hear this proof," he said.

"Had you not better hear this lady's deposition to the end?"

But he waved his hand impatiently.

"No, no," he said, "I have heard enough already, enough of vague suspicion and idle surmise. I can explain all that easily enough."

"And yet it leads direct to what I have to advance. It forms the natural introduction to the disclosure I have to make."

"No matter. Let me hear that. I am sick of accusation without proof."

"Good. We will vary the process for you. We will give you proof, and leave accusation to your own conscience. I have already made a deposition on oath; perhaps the worthy magistrate will read it?"

The functionary addressed instantly complied.

In a low, monotonous voice he read from a paper before him words detailing that with which we are already familiar.

The deposition described that he, the deponent, Ewen Ascott, did on a certain night therein named proceed to the house at Silverthorpe recently occupied by Fabian Temple; that he was accompanied by two police officers in private clothes; that they made a thorough search of the premises, which resulted in nothing more material than the discovery of the keys mentioned by the former deponent, which had been identified by Vida Hyde as having belonged to her father; that, having searched the house, they proceeded to the garden, where, after a time, they succeeded in exposing to view a buried leaden cist, some two feet beneath the ground.

At this point Fabian grew manifestly uneasy.

"Tell me," he cried, interrupting the reading, "what did that cist contain?"

"The dead body of David Hyde."

"That is you—you thought so. Thought it was he?"

"There was no ground for doubt or question. It

was he. The body remained in so good a state of preservation that there was no trouble in identifying him. The moment the light fell upon his face, I said 'It is he!'"

"And you deduce from this that he—"

"Was murdered?"

"Yes."

"Unhappily there was no need for deduction. The evidence of guilt was clear. The blade of a knife broken off short remained in the breast of the unhappy man."

Fabian started with a cry.

"Not driven there by my hand—not by my hand!" he exclaimed, in a transport of terror.

"No! By whose, then?"

Before Fabian could reply, the entrance of a servant, letter in hand, diverted attention in a fresh direction.

(To be continued.)

PASSION v. GENTLENESS.

HERBERT CLINTON was a promising young lawyer, of some twenty-eight years of age, residing in a small but thriving Western village.

He had graduated at one of our colleges, passing through both the collegiate and law department with some honour.

While at college he had read a great deal of English literature, all of which was written by the best English authors, and no man had a better taste in such things than he.

He was very pleasing in his personal appearance—had an unblemished character, and an easy, persuasive manner.

He came to his office every morning from one of the pleasantest homes in the world. And if by chance you should go to that home, you would see tumbling on the grass in front of the vine-covered portico, or up to his eyes in mischief, a merry, frolicsome, fun-loving little fellow, not over three years old.

And, moreover, you would have seen, had you entered the cottage, a Mrs. Clinton, as pleasant a lady as you ever saw.

All this looks well enough, but there is something wrong. Surely not in that house—it cannot be.

No; it is one of the pleasantest of cottages; plenty of sweet peas, and honeysuckles climbing up everywhere, a nice large garden, a grass-plot, white paint, venetian blinds, and furniture, that, if not elegant, is just what suits such a beautiful little cottage home as this.

Not in Harry, the little rogue. No; he was a fine specimen of an only son; rosy, intelligent, blue eyes, a good head, fine healthy complexion, and full of mischief. Yet there never was a more affectionate, easily-managed child in the world.

The mischief, I assure you, was not in Mrs. Clinton. Thrifty, lady-like, loving, right, and true throughout, Clinton knew to his heart's core that a more prudent, loving, sensible, intelligent wife could not be found.

Where, then, was the mischief? Was it in Clinton? Look at him; he is in perpetual motion. Reading, writing, talking, walking; he is always fast—a little too fast sometimes.

You can never associate the idea of mental depth and power with your quick stepping men. There is always a certain slowness about your strong men. It is said that "the bearing of a man's body is the outward emblem of the bearing of his soul."

Clinton is rather slight—rather swift. You meet him. He grasps your hand; asks you cordially of your health. There is no hypocrisy in this man, but instead an open, warm feeling. Still he talks too fast.

He don't give you time to answer one of his hasty questions, before he is asking another totally different. He is not at ease, and he keeps you from being so. You feel it also in his house; he is too cordial, too full of effort to make your visit pleasant to you.

You are glad when he leaves you to his more quiet wife. You never heard of his doing or even saying anything unbecoming in his life. You look upon him as a strange sort of a man; well—somehow—but you don't know what.

There he is at the bar defending that woman who sits by him. She is dressed in mourning. Some Chancery case, perhaps, or it may be a criminal case, and it is the widow's only son that he is defending.

Had you been in his office during the last week you would acknowledge that he had studied the case and prepared himself as thoroughly as a man could. He intensely desires to make for himself a position and a fortune.

His address to the jury is very eloquent. Yet, somehow, it does not convince. He is carried away with his own earnestness, but he does not carry others with him. His remarks are very interesting, and his hearers listen from first to last closely.

Yet, somehow, his arguing does not convince, his

pathos does not melt. He is not the right sort of a man to plead at the bar.

Where lies the defect? Clinton is a good scholar—a gentleman. I ask you, then, why he is not of more power, weight, or standing? I think I hear you answer:

"Why, because he is just what he is; had he more understanding it might be different; he could then be more than he is."

No; he knows, and so do his acquaintances, that he is capable of being much more than he is, but—somehow—somehow—he does not attain it. It is a singular impression Clinton makes on you. He himself is preyed upon by the same uneasy, singular feeling. His neighbours say he is not what he might be; his heart says so, too. Thus it worries him as an eternal truth.

One fine morning he was at work in his garden, on a square in which there were a few young plants, of a choice kind, just springing into life.

Harry was with him; being anxious to be as near his father as possible, who was his only playmate, he strayed from the path in which his father had seated him, and stood by his side.

Clinton, with a quick, passionate manner, seized his child by the arm and placed him rudely back in the path, accompanied with a harsh threat.

The child stood a moment, and then, forgetting the injunction of his father, went to him again over the tender plants.

This time Clinton seized him still more rudely, seated him in the walk, and, with harsh threats, struck him on his plump, red cheek. Harry, bursting into tears, wept in a passion.

His father was in a miserable, uneasy state of mind. He felt that there was something wrong. He always knew and acknowledged that he had a hasty, irritable disposition. He remembered that his child had been with him daily for the last three years; that not a day had passed in which he had not spoken loudly and even fiercely to him.

He thought, too, how long Harry had still followed him, because his father was all on earth to him; how the little thing had said he "was sorry," and had offered him a kiss after a harsh word or blow, altogether undeserved.

Clinton remembered how he had shown the same temper to his horse, and his dog; his servants—even the branch of a tree that had struck him as he walked. Yes, even to his own wife.

He remembered how, at every little domestic trouble, harsh, uncalled-for words had burst from his lips.

He knew that it had only made matters worse, and he felt how undignified, how unmanly, all this was. He pictured himself before his own mind as a peevish, uneasy, unhappy man—so weak-minded.

He glanced at his sobbing boy; saw how intelligent and healthful he was. He glanced over his orchard, his garden, and lawn; saw what a pleasant home was his.

He thought of his circle of friends, his position in the world, his own education and health. He saw how much he had to make him happy; and yet all this was jarred and cursed by his own irritation; the fever or plague was increasing daily.

As he thought thus, Harry again forgot himself and strayed towards his father. Clinton dropped his hose and reached towards his child.

The little fellow threw up his arms and started back, as if expecting a blow. "Harry," said the father in a low, gentle tone, "Harry, don't walk on papa's plants; go back and stay there till pa is done."

The child turned, as if by the irresistible power of slow-spoken, gentle words, went back to the path and resumed his seat, evidently not intending to transgress again.

As Clinton stood with the words dying on his lips, his hands outstretched, a sudden and singular idea took possession of him.

He felt that he had just said the most eloquent words that he had ever spoken—that there was a power in his tone and manner that he had never used before—a power that would move both judge and jury, even as it had moved Harry. The curse cursed here, too.

It was this irritable, hasty disposition which gave manner and tone to his public speaking—which made his arguments unconvincing, his pathos unfeeling. It was the same calm, serene manner that was needed at the bar as well as with Harry.

Arguing with that feeling and manner he felt would convince. Pleading with that quiet, gentle spirit he felt would melt the heart even to tears.

Clinton was a Christian. All that day he thought upon the matter—that night he knelt in the privacy of his closet, and laid bare the whole matter before heaven.

For his boy's sake—for his wife's sake—for his own sake—for his usefulness' sake at the bar—he implored aid to overcome his deadly and besetting sin.

He pleaded that, indulging in that disposition, he was alienating from himself his boy, and his wife—yes, and that he was alienating his own better self from himself.

And here his voice sank from a murmur into silence.

From that sweet spring morning Clinton was another man—a wiser, nobler, more successful man, in every sense of the word.

The change advanced steadily, and undoubtedly; every drop of his manly blood was restrained by it. His whole household felt it as a ship does an even wind.

You could see the change in his very gait, bearing, and conversation. Judge and jury felt it. It was the ceasing of a fever in a strong man.

Clinton went about easily and naturally, like a strong man as he was. The old uneasy feeling was forgotten, and an ease and grace of manner and tone succeeded.

It was the higher development of the father, the husband, the orator, the gentleman, and the Christian.

"Surely love is the fountain of patience and peace. Surely it is the absence of passion that makes angels the beings they are. Men can become very nearly angels or devils even before they have left the world."

G.C.

MARRIED, NOT MATED.

CHAPTER IX.

WESTLEY started at once, to say to Mrs. Perrin that her friend was dangerously ill; and Rosey silly turned away her face to conceal the effect of such an absurd suggestion upon her countenance.

Westley had not gone twenty yards when I was sent after him in all haste. Uncle Peter had changed his mind, and would have him go first for Deacon Dole; he felt in a serious frame of mind, and believed the deacon was a good man, if there were such a thing in the world.

Long before it was time for him to have delivered the message, the querulous invalid exclaimed:

"Oh, Sally Ann! do you think that boy will ever get back?"

"Oh, yes, my dear; it is not time yet."

"Well, do you think the deacon will come, Sally Ann?"

"Yes, my dear, he will surely come, if he is at home."

"But, Sally Ann, will he be at home?"

"Yes, it's most likely."

"Well, then, how long will he be getting there, Sally Ann?"

"Perhaps an hour, my dear Mr. Throckmorton."

"That will be so long; I can't wait; I wish he had not gone; I wish he would come back; I wish we had sent for old Mrs. Perrin, and not for the deacon at all; I'm afraid he can't do me any good; do you think he can, Sally? Do you think a deacon is likely to do a sick man good?"

"Oh, yes, I am sure Deacon Dole will do you good; he is a kind, sympathizing sort of a man."

"Oh, Sally Ann! I don't want sympathy; what good would that do me?"

"I didn't say sympathy," said Aunt Sally, "I said sensible."

"Oh, Sally, you say anything; you don't know what you say."

Aunt Sally freely admitted that she did not always know what she said; but Uncle Peter was not to be pacified; he felt so awfully bad, how could he be?

"I wish we had sent for Mrs. Perrin," he resumed, after an interval of groans.

"I wish we had," said Aunt Sally; "she is a good nurse."

"Sally Ann, go to the window, and the moment you see Westley, order him to go after Mrs. Perrin as hard as he can drive."

"I will, my dear."

"Are you at the window now?"

"Yes, I am at the window."

"Well, then, do you see him, Sally Ann?"

"No, dear Mr. Throckmorton; I wish I did."

"Oh, mercy! Sally, can't you hear him, then?"

"No, dear Mr. Throckmorton."

"Just faintly—a great way off."

"No."

"Oh, mercy, mercy, mercy! how soon do you think you can hear?"

"In ten minutes, I guess."

"Ten minutes! bless me! that is long enough for a man to die and go to heaven."

"Yes, Uncle Samuel Peter," said Rosey, "or to a less agreeable place."

Uncle Peter left off groaning long enough to say his ward was the wildest young lady he had ever the pleasure of knowing, but hastened to add:

"Oh! Sally Ann, don't you see that boy? I wish we had sent for Mrs. Perrin; do you think she can do any good; Sally Ann?"

"Yes; she has been in sickness a great deal, and she is good company, too."

"I wish Westley would come. Do you see him, Sally Ann? Oh, dear me! oh my!"

"Are you in great pain, my dear Mr. Throckmorton?"

"No, Sally Ann; but I am so sick every way."

"What can I do?"

"Oh, Sally Ann! I don't want you to do anything; nothing you can do will do me any good. Give me a drink of cold water, and a spoonful or two of custard, and put the quilt over me, and take the blanket off; make me some hot tea and a piece of toast, and wet some brown paper with vinegar, and tie it on my head, and shake up my pillows, and put the top one down—it's as hot as fire—and the down one up. Ain't I fallen away a good deal? Chafe my temples with your hands—harder, harder, harder! Why don't you get me the cold water or the hot tea? I want them both. Oh, Sally Ann! you can't do anything for me—nothing in the world. Is that boy coming? he has been gone a month. Oh, why don't you make me better?"

Such were some of the demands made on the time and temper of good and patient little Aunt Sally. No wonder she was worn down in the course of a few hours, and willing to send for Deacon Dole or anybody else.

In twenty minutes after he had been despatched, Westley returned, bringing intelligence that the deacon would be there almost as soon as himself; but Uncle Peter persisted in sending for Mrs. Perrin.

"She can ride over on your horse, and you can walk," he said; "there is no time to harness the horses. Tell her to come if she will be so good—so very good—and pass the night with me. Be sure and say if she will be so very good."

"Oh, Sally Ann! ain't it time for the deacon to be here?"

"Do you feel any worse?"

His answer was interrupted by a soft knocking on the door; the deacon had waived all ceremony, in view of the urgency of the case, and entered the house without ringing.

He trod softly, as though in the presence of death, and having wrung the hand of Aunt Sally in silence, approached the bedside, saying sorrowfully:

"Bad enough, Mr. Throckmorton, ain't you?"

"Yes, Deacon Dole, I am very low."

"A high fever, and increasing, I should say. What have you done for him, Mrs. Throckmorton?"

The deacon shook his head; he had seen many similar cases, and critical as this one was (he spoke low and looked dubious), he believed, if Mr. Throckmorton would submit to his direction, there would be little for Dr. Cutaway to do on his arrival.

He did not pretend but that the patient was in a most dangerous state, and advised him to be prepared for the worst, for human skill was often unavailing; and though he had great confidence in the remedies he proposed, his skill might, and probably would be baffled.

So, in the beginning of the deacon's treatment, the fears of the patient were greatly augmented—to such a degree, indeed, that he would have accepted any treatment.

"Oh, Sally Ann!" he cried, "do get whatever the good deacon wants, and let him cure me."

"Don't be too sanguine, my friend," the deacon replied solemnly; "you are very sick now, and it may not be in the power of earthly medicine to do you any good."

All the hot bricks were carried away, all the clothing tossed off, a chair curiously propped beneath the pillows, the brown paper, wet with vinegar, thrown into the fire, and a half-gallon of saltish warm water administered.

After the desired effect had been produced, the patient found himself tremulously weak, and felt that he was growing worse every moment, and sent another messenger for the surgeon, fifty miles away, though of its availing anything there was no hope, one having been sent six or eight hours previously.

To encourage and confirm his patient in the increasing alarm he felt, the deacon talked of all the horrible diseases he had ever known; of all the sudden deaths, and all the death-bed scenes; and told how such a man had been well at six o'clock, and a corpse at eight; how another, from going into a cellar, when he was in a heated state, had caught his death cold; and with various other mournful reminiscences, calculated to enfeeble even the bravest courage, he followed up his first prescription.

At length Uncle Peter announced his belief that he could not survive the night upon which the deacon consulted, in whispers, with the almost frantic wife, and returning to the bedside, groaning sympathetically, applied cloths, wet with camphor, to the nose and mouth of the wretched man, and sedately waved

before his face a large palm leaf fan, as if to keep life in him as long as possible.

At this stage of affairs a little woman, dressed in black, bustled into the room, and in a lively, cheerful voice, inquired what seemed to be the matter.

The deacon shook his head, and leading her mournfully aside, communicated, in a whisper so loud that both Aunt Sally and Uncle Peter must have heard it distinctly, the intelligence that the patient could not live till midnight—if he revived, he might possibly last till morning, but no longer.

"Hi! hi!" replied Mrs. Perrin, "don't tell me such scare-crow stories as that; he ain't going to die to-night more than you be."

And approaching the bed she was about to speak, when the deacon, resuming his charge, called her a meddling old woman.

Uncle Peter really thought himself too ill to notice her, and Aunt Sally was scarcely mistress of her actions; so, Mrs. Perrin, taking umbrage, as well she might, floundered out of the room, saying, "She didn't think Mr. Throckmorton needed anything but a little nursing—she had been up elsewhere two nights, and was almost sick herself."

An hour passed, during which the salt water was freely administered, while the sick man mingled his groans with calls on Sally Ann, who, poor woman, sat wringing her hands and weeping.

At the end of that time the deacon took the responsibility of calling in Farmer Hatfield; apologizing to Aunt Sally, by saying "He might be needed before morning."

"Oh, Sally Ann! Sally Ann! can't you roast me some potatoes, and give me some brandy and water. I just want to see if I can swallow; and read me a sermon, or ask the deacon to read one."

"Yes, dear Mr. Throckmorton," and the ashes were filled with potatoes, the brandy and water mixed, and the sermon brought; but the deacon had not got through the first sentence when Farmer Hatfield came in.

He wore a cheerful but interested look, and taking Uncle Peter's hand, said he was right sick, but not dangerously so; and after a little talk about the late damp weather, rheumatism, &c., he grew more cheerful, spoke of the election, and affairs generally.

The patient pressed himself better, or, to use his own words, he "breathed a little easier."

Mr. Hatfield was a man of impulses; and upon one of them, he arose and poured the salt and water into the fire, and said he could concoct a medicine of a few favourite roots and herbs that would be miraculous in its effects.

"Oh, my good Mr. Hatfield, do you think it possible for me to live?" asked the patient, opening his eyes, and speaking with more animation than he had before for some hours.

"Why, to be sure," replied Mr. Hatfield. "I will go home and bring from my garden the things I have mentioned: meantime, you must have a flannel shirt on, and have your arms and face rubbed with camphor: flannel and camphor applied in time will cure almost any disease, but, in the state you are in, you will need a little strengthening syrup."

And with the assurance that he would return early in the morning, bringing the medicine, which could not possibly do any harm, even if it did no good, he departed; and the deacon, shortly after, a little offended, took his leave.

Uncle Peter renewed his exclamations of "Oh Sally Ann!" but was so exhausted physically, and so relieved mentally, that he presently fell asleep, and woke not until sunrise the next morning.

Mr. Middleton was the first visitor of the day; he was glad to find his friend no worse, and begged to be allowed to send his own family physician to prescribe for him, till the arrival of the one already summoned.

Delays were dangerous, and this physician had given perfect satisfaction to a great number of families, for years, so that he could cordially recommend him.

"Now, my dear Mr. Throckmorton, do allow me this pleasure," concluded Mr. Middleton.

Uncle Peter was prevailed upon, and so much better in consequence of the sleep he had had, that he actually arose, and in gown and slippers awaited the consultation; and furthermore, he expressed a hope that that miserable bore, Mr. Hatfield, would not trouble him with his supplies.

He was falling back on his old self-sufficiency, when that kind-hearted neighbour returned, with a brown earthen jar of syrup, and one of his own new red flannel shirts.

Uncle Peter thanked him civilly, and, without communicating the fact of Mr. Middleton's visit, or its result, managed politely to get his honest-minded friend out of the house before the arrival of the doctor; and well it was for Mr. Hatfield's peace of mind that he did so, as otherwise he would have seen his precious preparations very contemptuously tossed aside.

Aunt Sally could not be thankful enough; she had prayed all night for her dear husband's restoration, she said, but didn't suppose it was at all probable that her prayers had been answered; Samuel must have prayed for himself, though she had not heard him.

Tears came into Rosalie's eyes, and putting down her book, she kissed Aunt Sally's withered cheek; saying she would never know till she was asked to sit up higher, in the better world, how good and how humble she had been.

The doctor was formal, ostentatious, and wise; and Uncle Peter was so much prepossessed in his favour that he almost regretted having sent for the surgeon. He inquired minutely all the symptoms, replying, as each was unfolded:

"Oh, yes, I supposed so! precisely as I anticipated!" and the like; and left half-a-dozen small powders, neatly folded in white paper, with a phial containing some liquid; having an unpronounceable name; and adjoining the strictest observance as to times and small quantities, took his departure.

"What did he say was the matter with you?" asked Aunt Sally.

"He didn't say," replied Uncle Peter.

"What did he think of your pulse?"

"He didn't feel it."

"And your tongue?"

"He did not examine my tongue, my dear; but he evidently is a man of great skill!"

Aunt Sally could not see in what way he had manifested his skill; nevertheless, she had no doubt that it was as Mr. Throckmorton asserted.

One thing the skillful man had said which greatly amused Uncle Peter; he had reported to his patient how the modest and really estimable village doctor and thrust his thumbs into his vest pockets, on hearing that Mr. Throckmorton was ill, and that the great Doctor Cutaway had been sent for, and observed that the patient might die while the surgeon was on the way to visit him, and that unless he had a limb to be amputated the movement was a very unfortunate one.

Mr. Middleton had not added an expression of his own agreement with his brother of the village.

This greatly amused Uncle Peter. There was no doubt in his mind but that the little gentleman would like to be his physician.

Aunt Sally looked inquiringly, to ascertain in what way it was funny; but even when it was explained that to be physician to Mr. P. T. Throckmorton would give standing to the little doctor, and probably help him to more money than he had had for months, she failed to see it in quite the light that she felt she ought, for the smile seemed a painful one, and she said she wished everybody had all the money they wanted.

"How you waste sympathy!" said Uncle Samuel Peter.

"I suppose so," was the meek reply of my aunt; and there followed a silence which her husband, feeling some compunction, perhaps, interrupted by saying:

"I really feel quite revived; dear Mrs. Throckmorton, let me prevail upon you to take a little rest—you may have to sit up with me all night, you know."

He could not even seem to be generous, he was so selfish; if he asked his wife to take rest, it was after all for his own sake; but she, dear little woman, saw it not; and, exhausted by so much care and toil, she needed little entreaty, and was soon fast asleep.

Her grateful rest, however, was broken before long by the howlings and worryings of her husband.

The first effects of medicines, generally, are not very pleasant, and the frightened patient fancied the natural operation of the drugs to be an augmentation of his disease.

Dear Mrs. Throckmorton awoke as Sally Ann again, and her anxieties and labours were renewed.

Mr. Middleton's doctor was denounced; not another of his prescriptions would the sick man swallow; he believed himself poisoned already; he urged Sally Ann to bring whatever antidotes she had ever heard of; and with excitement and counteracting medicines, the symptoms, in the course of the day, took a more serious turn.

I was very much troubled at this turn of the matter.

I was afraid of death, and it seemed to me that Uncle Peter could not live long. I tried to make myself useful; but by some strange fatality I did wrong whatever I did at all, and when I would have made amends, with tears, they were an offence also.

Meantime Rosalie glided along smoothly and happily, most of the time discreetly absenting herself from the sick-room. The smell of the medicine affected her unpleasantly, she said to Uncle Samuel Peter.

Now she was reading, in the shade of some tree, smiling to herself; and now going through the garden walks, pulling flowers to pieces, or mocking the birds with her own songs.

Once, when the gardener asked her how her uncle

was, she replied, that his malady consisted chiefly in groans, and that, consequently, his friends suffered more from it than himself; and joined on her song where she had broken it off.

The gardener said she was like sunshine on the path, and he liked better to have her in the garden than all the birds.

When I went there, he said my red eyes would frighten the owls, who inquired if I had seen my mother's ghost, and so I returned to my thankless watch again.

It was sunset when the great surgeon came. He had the air of one who drew at least the third part of heaven's heat after him.

Mr. Throckmorton's was only one of a thousand important cases; it could not, of course, be expected that he should give much of his personal attention; he had snatched a moment, as it were, and had probably risked the lives of a dozen patients, to make the visit.

He would not flatter his patient by any hopes of immediate recovery; the case was critical, and would require most skilful treatment. He saw presented not only a dangerous form of disease, but also the action of most deleterious nostrums.

He could not, in fact, warrant a cure at all; and, at best, the patient must expect a long and severe illness. He could not possibly remain above an hour. He recommended and executed blood-letting and blistering; and, having prepared medicines for a week, on the supposition that each one would act thus and so, and laid down directions about drops and half-drops, hours and half hours, the distinguished Doctor Cutaway left the room, with an ostentatious sweep.

The pretentious airs and the unmeaning magniloquence of the city celebrity were calculated to inspire confidence on the part of his patient; but to Rosalie they were only amusing, and I could not help a little sympathy in her scepticism respecting both Uncle Peter's danger and Doctor Cutaway's abilities.

Of course the patient found no immediate relief; he suffered, as the doctor predicted; but after a thousand groans, and as many calls upon Sally Ann, under the influence of a powerful narcotic, fell into a partial slumber.

Rosalie sat fast asleep in an easy chair; I looked for the first faint streaks of day; and Aunt Sally walked up and down the room, wringing her hands.

Doctor Cutaway, as I said, possessed some skill in surgery, but was not otherwise eminent, and though his reputation served him for a wide medical practice, it is probable that our village doctor, so despised by Uncle Peter, was really his superior in knowledge of materia medica.

However, it was not so believed, and when the famous personage was summoned, the case was supposed to be perilous in the extreme; therefore, it no sooner became known that he had actually visited Mr. Samuel P. T. Throckmorton than that person was declared by all the gossips to be nigh the gates of death, and one and all of his neighbours came to see him, and each one knew of some certain, speedy and safe cure for his disease, if he would only take it.

For a day, Doctor Cutaway's prescriptions were adhered to; then the patient began to waver, and on the second morning his faith was quite gone. He was "sinking every moment," he said, which was quite true.

Uncle Peter began to feel that everybody was his friend again, and even when Mrs. Rachel Muggins was announced, he smiled, and answered:

"Let the woman come up, bless her; it is kind of her, I am sure, to come and see me."

"Mercy sakes, old man!" was her first exclamation, "be you lying here on your back? now who would have thought it, you that have never had a sick bone in your body?"

She had left the baby at home asleep, and just run across the fields for a minute, she said, not having taken time to dress up her head; and to tell the truth she had not done so for a week—her declaration no one who saw the frizzled disorder beneath her night-cap could doubt.

Making no further apology, she threw aside her neckerchief and cap, and proceeded to make some personal restorations, such as washing her face and hands in my Uncle Peter's convenient bowl, and cleaning her nails with a darning needle, which she took from one of her sleeves.

After this she shook loose her tresses, and having asked Aunt Sally for a comb, seated herself by the bed, and began vigorously to work, talking all the time.

She had with her the hopeful darling who made the fourth of a donkey's load, when we first saw her, and she talked and combed her hair, he stood pulling at her dress and teasing her.

"Now be a good boy, and mother will give him a lump of sugar. See, he will scare all the folks to death, and if he opens his mouth so wide, a cat will

jump into it, and then his mother will have no little boy."

He did not seem affected by this pathetic appeal, but replied that he wished a cat had jumped into her mouth before she came to Old Throckmorton's.

"Did you ever!" exclaimed the mother, laughing behind her hand, in a peculiar way; "I tell you now, he is one of 'em."

"I am that," replied the son, and he forthwith commenced biting at the arms of his appreciative parent, by way of bringing her to terms.

"Will he have some cake or honey?" asked Aunt Sally; "or is it nothing I can give him he wants?"

"Why, the truth is," said Mrs. Muggins, who had been anxiously expecting some such demonstration on the part of my aunt, "the boy has got a considerable appetite from the long walk we've had this morning, to say nothing of his having had rather slim fodder for a day or two, and he would like a little of your nice things, and I am dreadfully afraid he will be obstreperous till he gets some."

Thus much accomplished, and Mr. Graham's ancient housekeeper having at length completed her toilet and seated herself in order for duty beside my Uncle Peter's bed, she proceeded with the kindly purpose which "brought her out so early in the morning."

"I suppose it's none of my business," she said, "but I'm such a fool I can't help saying what I think, and I know a-moment if you would send for my Indian doctor he would cure you; he has been with me in all my bad times, and he is just as nice and modest-spoken a man as you would wish to see. I'll say that for him. The way I heard of him was this:—I was over to gramman's one day after I was married; there was a full moon I know, and I went over at night; I expected him to come after me, but he didn't come and I went home alone. That's the way with your married men, they haven't as much gallantry as they had when they were bachelors."

Here she glanced significantly at Rosalie.

"Well, I was complaining of a pain in my wrist, it appeared like as if I had sprained it, and gramman says also, 'why don't you send for the Indian doctor?'"

"What Indian doctor?" says I. "Why, Doctor Snakeroot," says she. "What a funny name!" says I, "it fairly makes a body crawl!"

"It might seem curious to some that gramman should recommend Doctor Snakeroot to me, instead of her own son, but then that's been in a house as long as I was at Woodside, know things that them don't know that hasn't been in a house so familiarly; and I tell you now, a body finds out things that a body wouldn't think of, by being intimately into the house of some that are called first out."

"I've seen strange things, in my time. Have you seen Staff Graham, girl? or Doctor Graham, as he pretends to call himself," she asked, abruptly; and, on our reply that we had not, she said she would just warn us not to fall in love with him, for though he was mighty good looking, and had a smile that was like an angel's, he was as proud as old Nick, and she had seen a good many fine ladies try to catch him, who couldn't come it, and she thought there would be a slender chance for the like of us.

Rosalie replied by a disdainful smile, which made Mrs. Muggins look a little mean, and she went on to say, "I am such a big fool I allers say just what I think; that."

"My good friend, what about the Indian doctor?" interrupted Uncle Peter.

"Why," said Rosalie, "he cured Jane Hill when all the doctors had given her up, and, in fact, she had no hopes of herself, as you may say; she sent for a preacher and made her peace; and after that, she heard of Snakeroot, some way or other—I don't know how it was—and she sent right off for him—her brother rode all night a-moose; and when he got there the very first word was, 'While there is life there is hope,' and they said he set right to work like as if he was in earnest. He said a good deal all right, but he could cure her. Oh, they say she was just as white as a corpse. They say she took her medicine out of a cup that was made of a bear's ear; I don't know whether he would give it to you that way—likely what is good for some ain't good for others. Now, when I have my bad times, he always tells me to eat rabbit's meat; he mostly traps them when he is out chopping. Jane wears the skin of a black snake round her left ankle—she wears it under her stockings—nobody sees it; it's a charm."

(To be continued.)

NAVAL ORDINANCE.—We believe that it is intended, on the promotion to flag rank of Captain Astley Cooper Key, C.B., to offer him a seat at the Board of Admiralty, where he will, it is understood, take charge of all matters connected with naval ordinance. The only wonder in our minds is that such an appointment was not made years ago. We have no lack of guns. There are now three 300-pounders—for want of ships to receive them—lying on the jetty in

Portsmouth Dockyard. Then, again, if these were shipped, we are still without carriages on which to mount them. We are waiting the result of experiments, which, it is hoped, will be fairly and honourably carried out. Then, again, if we had ships and carriages ready for the ordnance, we very much doubt if we have a stock of proper ammunition for the latter. We are a very procrastinating people, and we fear that even the terrible experiences of the Crimean war have failed to cure us of our national vice. We are apt to rely too much on our powers of production. These, no doubt, are great, but "the stitch in time" is as valuable to nations as it is to the holder of a simple pair of breeches.

THE CULTIVATION OF MEMORY.

I HAVE a decided opinion that the cultivation of memory beyond a certain point, is fatally calculated to injure the thinking faculty, and destroy everything like originality. Reason and imagination are both sufferers by it. Indeed, a very accurate verbal memory is wholly inconsistent with genius.

Any reflecting person may easily satisfy himself of the truth of this, by attending to the process of his own mind, when he is endeavouring to recollect a certain number of words. His attention must be closely concentrated on what he is about: he must exclude every idea that is foreign from what he is engaged upon. If, during the contemptible mechanism of getting a thing by rote, a useful, a noble, or original thought should arise in the mind of the mechanist, he must instantly discard it.

No matter if the pursuit of it should lead to the sublimest combinations, or the most important discovery. It has no business in his mind; it only serves to intercept the train of impressions which he is then endeavouring to establish.

The pedagogue tells you, that when you are committing anything to memory, you must be careful to keep your mind from wandering; i. e. you must chain down the whole power of your perceptive faculty to a dozen or two of sounds, (for it is ten to one if any ideas are announced to them,) and shut yourself out altogether from that field of contemplation, where alone it is possible to gather the flowers of fancy, or the fruits of reason.

By pursuing this subject we might discover the cause of the want of genius among men of what is called regular education. It is, that almost the whole system of instruction for youth consists in the cultivation of a verbal memory, to the neglect of almost every other faculty. This plainly shows up the truism, that nature is more powerful than art.

VEGETABLE SILK.—Signor Potenza, an Italian, produces what he calls *vegetable silk* from fine fibres in the bark of the mulberry tree. By pruning the trees once in two years, he obtains a quantity of branches, which are exposed to the sun to facilitate the separation of the bark, and the latter is boiled in water pure, or acid, or alkaline, according to circumstances, after which the fibres are prepared for spinning either by hand or by a machine. Ten kilogrammes of branches yield one and a half kilogrammes of the vegetable silk. This can be woven by itself, but is said to be best suited for mixture with real silk in the fabrication of various tissues.

A PARADISE FOR BEEFEEVERS.—An Uruguay correspondent writes:—"Where I am now we have the best grass for animals all the year round to eat, at a cost of from £1 10s. to £2 a head. This is the price of the animal alive. The supply is unlimited, and the meat is of the very best description, and free from all disease, cattle plague being here unknown. I have killed of my own estancia here 'shots' of four years old, giving of grease and tallow alone 50 lb., and these were all grass-fed. Here artificial feeding is unknown, and would not pay at present. Why, therefore, should England ever want beef, when it can easily be got from this province, dead or alive, as cared for, and to any extent, within the space of thirty-seven days by steamer from here to England, at very little cost? Here the best beef is only 1d. per lb. in the market."

SOMNAMBULISM EXTRAORDINARY.—A remarkable case of somnambulism occurred in Devonport last week. The family amongst whom the case occurred are respectably connected. About two o'clock in the morning the servant was aroused by the front door of the house being slammed loudly, and knowing that the door had been fastened securely on the previous night, she feared that something was wrong. She dressed herself and aroused her master, and having informed him of the circumstance, they proceeded to the door, and to their astonishment found that it had been unbolted and unlocked from the inside, somebody having evidently left the house. Mr. — at once proceeded to the room of his son, a young man about twenty-two years of age, to arouse him, but was sur-

prised to find that he was gone, though his clothes were lying to all appearance where he had placed them on the previous night. No case of somnambulism having before occurred in the family, Mr. — had no idea of any such thing, and naturally became alarmed. As quickly as he could he passed through the small garden in front of the house into the street or roadway to see if any persons were near. He walked on to the head of Ford Hill, when he was amazed to see a human form in a man's night-dress walking up the hill towards him. He waited till the form approached him, and then, in unspeakable consternation, he beheld that it was his son, who passed him without noticing him. He followed at a short distance, but presently a man overtook him from another direction and aroused him. The astonishment and fright of the young man, when aroused from the sleep he was in, might be better imagined than described. He was at once taken home, when the mystery was cleared up. As in all cases of somnambulism the incentive in the dream is very strong, so it was in this instance. The young man had the evening before lost a valuable ring on Ford Hill, belonging to his father, and he was much vexed about it. He stated that he dreamt that he had been to sleep, and in that sleep, in his dream, dreamt where the ring was. He proceeded to the spot, when he awoke "in his dream," and there found the ring. Extraordinary to relate he had the ring on when aroused by the person alluded to.

A WORD ABOUT GIPSIERS.

THE gipsies were first seen in England about 1512; but they had come into Scotland seventy years before.

In the reign of Henry VIII. penal laws were enacted "against an outlandish people calling themselves Egyptians, using no craft or feat of merchandise;" this was the 10th chap. of the 22nd of Hen. 8. Their sins were that they "wandered from shire to shire, and from place to place, in great company, and used great subtlety and craft to deceive the people," telling fortunes, and also committing "many heinous felonies and robberies."

Under Queen Elizabeth a law was made by which it was made felony, without benefit of the clergy, for any person being fourteen years, whether "natural born subject or stranger," who should remain with them one month at once or at several times. Many gipsies were transported to the Continent, and many were hanged.

A few years before the Restoration, thirteen gipsies were hanged at one Suffolk Assizes. In Queen Elizabeth's time there were computed to be ten thousand gipsies in England. In Scotland they were more numerous. At first they passed themselves off as persons of consequence from Egypt and pilgrims under orders from the Pope.

James the Fourth wrote a letter to the King of Denmark in 1566, on behalf of Antonio Garvino, Earl of Little Egypt, and the other afflicted and lamentable tribe of his retinue, who, by command of the Pope, were "pilgriming over the Christian world." The gipsies continued in good report, or rather were not found out, for many years.

James the Fifth of Scotland entered into a league with John Faw, "Lord and Earl of Little Egypt," and wrote in favour of this Prince or Rajah was "subscribed with our hand and under our Privy Seal at Falkland the 16th day of February and the 28th of our reign." This writ, which is long and complicated, recognizes the laws and customs of the gipsies amongst themselves.

But this was their last gleam of prosperity, for they quarrelled bitterly amongst themselves and got into the courts of justice, whereby their true character appeared.

But the most fatal thing for them was an adventure which befell King James the Fifth. As he was going on one of his roaming expeditions, disguised as a gaberlunzie man, he fell in with a party of gipsies, who were carousing in a cave near Wemyss, in Fifeshire: whether it was a drunken quarrel, or that the disguised King made love to one of the gipsy women, is uncertain; but a scuffle ensued, in which his sacred Majesty was near being killed, and when order was restored, he was kept prisoner and made to carry their wallets, and treated with much harshness.

It is possible they did not know him; at last, after some days, he contrived to write on a slip of paper, which he bribed a boy to carry to Falkland, about ten miles off, to tell his nobles that the "guld man of Ballangloek" was in captivity. As soon as assistance arrived, the King caused two of the gipsy tinkers, who had treated him the worst, to be hanged on the spot.

When he got back to Falkland, he lost no time in passing an Order in Council by which, "if three gipsies were seen together, any one who chose might hang two of them, letting the third one go free." This order was followed up by other enactments equally severe; and these laws were doubtless the

origin of the secrecy which the gipsies observe about themselves and their race to this day.

In spite of the laws, the gipsies continued to live and flourish, and to be a people amongst themselves. They were tinkers, skilful workers in metal, horse-dealers, farriers and potters. Some gipsies acquired wealth and dressed in fine clothes: Johnny Faw, a handsome gipsy, "a Lord of Little Egypt," of the same tribe as the foregoing, induced the wife of the Earl of Cassilis to elope with him, in the absence of her husband, who had gone to attend the Assembly of Divines in Westminster, 1643. The husband on his return pursued his wife and recovered her; the whole gang were hanged, and the lady shut up in a lonely tower to the day of her death.

They were fifteen valiant men,
Black, but very bonny,
And they all lost their lives for one,
The Earl of Cassilis' lady.

Mr. Browning's "Flight of the Duchess" is a poetic version of a similar elopement, without the tragical ending. Gipsies seem to have a touch of genius in whatever work they do; but fecklessness and want of staying power, as jockeys call it, are the badge of all their tribe, and the real curse upon them.

The word "*gitano*," Spanish for gipsy, signifies also a flatterer; and all the derivatives ring the changes upon wheedling, enticing, flattering, blandishments—all being synonyms for "gipsy-like." The sins of the gipsies against their neighbours have been mostly confined to robbing, cheating, and flattering; they have very seldom murdered, except amongst themselves.

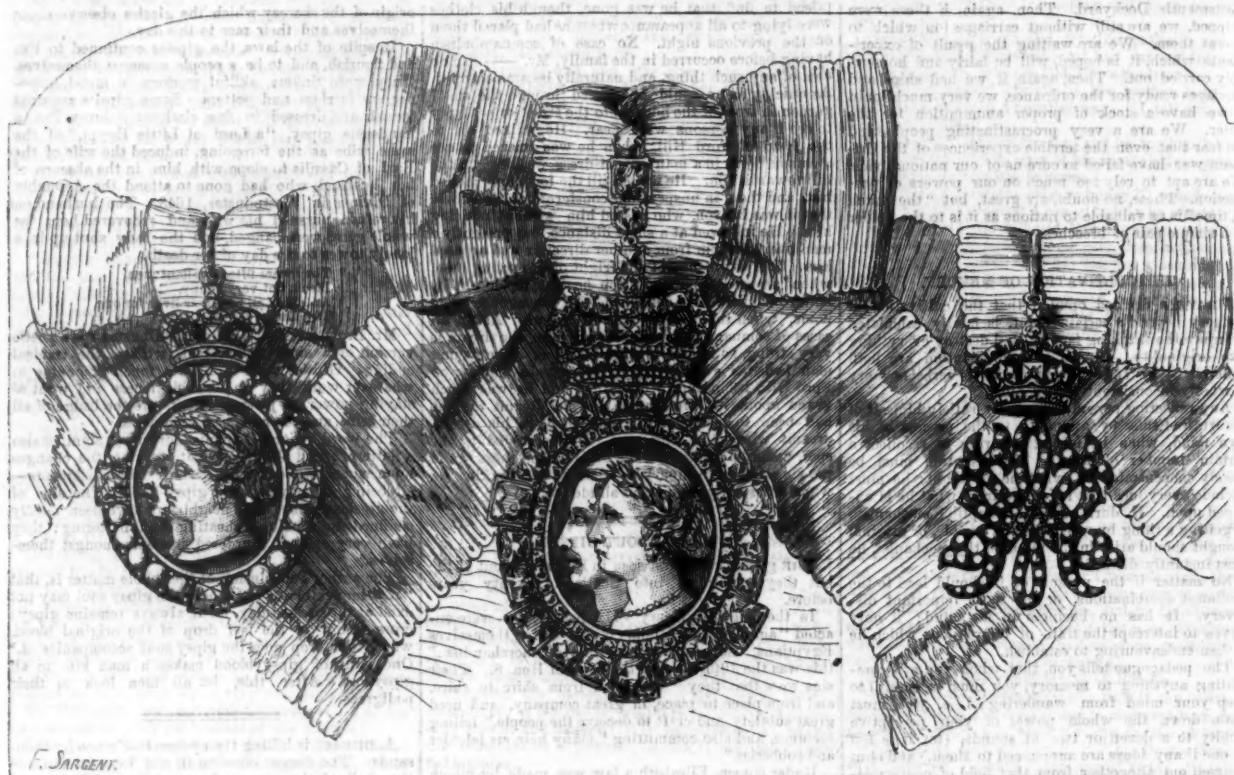
The author's conclusion of the whole matter is, that "it is impossible to say where the gipsy soul may not exist at the present day, for it always remains gipsy; cross it out to the last drop of the original blood, where that drop goes the gipsy soul accompanies it." One drop of gipsy blood makes a man kin to all gipsydom. After this, let all men look to their pedigrees.

A DISEASE is killing the oysters in France by thousands. The disease consists in the introduction into the shell of the oyster of a parasite, which, armed with a screw-shaped shell, sharp as a file, manages to drill a hole beneath the scales of the under shell, and making its bed beneath the body of the mollusc, to suck out its juices, leaving the creature dry, hard, and, according to the judgment of the physicians consulted, decidedly poisonous to the human frame.

CURIOUS COUNTER-CURRENT IN LAKE ERIE.—The *Cleveland Herald*, of a recent date, notices a phenomenon in Lake Erie. Many persons gathered along the banks of the Cuyahoga river to see the water flowing towards the source whence it came, carrying with it logs, blocks, and other floating materials. In the afternoon the river rose about two feet, being at its highest stage about four o'clock, when, from some cause, the water began to flow in an opposite direction from the lake. The wind was blowing a stiff breeze from the south, which makes the matter more singular.

ANCIENT PYRAMIDS IN CALIFORNIA.—Another of those numerous edifices of civilised antiquity in the New World has just been discovered, in the shape of a great stone pyramid, composed of courses from eighteen inches to nearly three feet in thickness, and five to eight feet in length. It has a level top of more than fifty feet square, though it is said to be evident from the remains that it was once completed. This pyramid differs, in some respects, from the Egyptian pyramids, being more slender or pointed, and the outer surface of the blocks being out to an angle that gave the structure, when new and complete, a smooth or regular surface from top to bottom.

LYON KING OF ARMS.—From the middle of the 15th century to 1796 the office was invariably held by a commoner—several Lindsays (including Sir David, the poet), at least two Erskines, Sir James Balfour, &c. In England and Ireland, and every other country in Europe, the King of Arms, whether he be Garter or Ulster, has always been a commoner. The opinion in Scotland, particularly amongst the members of the "College of Justice" (bench, bar, and writers to the signet), the Royal Academy, Society of Antiquaries, &c., appears to be decidedly in favour of a commoner. If a nobleman is appointed, the office would be merged in the peerage; while it would be magnified if conferred on a commoner. Moreover, there are certain duties pertaining to the office which are not considered compatible with the dignity of a peer. Accordingly William IV. had to dispense with the services of the Earl of Kinnoull (the late Lord Lyon) as investitures of the Thistle, when "Lyon" ought to attend as an officer of the Order. Many of the leading peers and commoners of Scotland are strongly of opinion that, for these and other reasons, a commoner should be appointed, especially if he happens to be conversant with the "gentle science" of heraldry.



Second Class.

First Class.

Third Class.

[THE ROYAL (FAMILY) ORDER OF VICTORIA AND ALBERT.]

THE ROYAL ORDER OF VICTORIA AND ALBERT.

WE are, this week, by permission, and the courtesy of the Lord Chamberlain's Office, enabled to give our readers an elaborately executed drawing of the Insignia and jewels of the illustrious (FAMILY) Royal Order of Victoria and Albert.

Our readers have doubtless often, upon reading in the daily papers the list of names of illustrious and noble personages attending Her Majesty's Drawing Rooms, wondered what could be the meaning of the line "Her Royal Highness the Princess Helena and the Crown Princess of Prussia (Princess Royal of England)," were the "Victoria and Albert Order;" at all events, the present writer has been long piqued to discover something of the origin of this new Royal and illustrious Decoration.

First let us premise, that it is an Order conferred alone upon Ladies, like that of Isabel of Spain, and that of the Lady of the Jewelled Cross of Austria. *Appropos* of the latter, we have before us now the card of a Countess, after whose noble title runs—*Dame Noble de l'Ordre de la Croix Etoilée d'Autriche*.

Very eccentric, at least if we may believe the legends, have been the origin of many illustrious Orders of Knighthood. To wit, that of the Golden Fleece, instituted by Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, A.D. 1429, which was supposed to commemorate the plentifulness of mutton, or, perhaps, generally the great prosperity of that Sovereign Duchy, and that of the Order of the Garter in connection with the name of King Edward and the Countess of Salisbury.

The illustrious Order of the Garter, now, perhaps, the most illustrious in the world, is bestowed alone upon Sovereign Princes and great Nobles, (we believe it was never but once conferred upon a commoner, although it is recorded that the late great statesman, Sir Robert Peel, had the distinguished honour of being enabled to decline it); being, in fact, apart from her Royal favour, the one honour alone that the Sovereign can bestow upon him whom Her Majesty delighteth to honour, and who possesses already the highest rank, titles, and wealth.

Illustrious, however, as is the Order of the Garter, the Order of "VICTORIA AND ALBERT" will be estimated by posterity in even a greater degree: for not only is it illustrious as being, in the first class, only bestowed upon the PRINCESSES OF THE BLOOD ROYAL, nearest the Throne; in the second, upon the great Ladies of the Household, or friends of the Queen Regnant, or Queen Consort; and, thirdly, upon Ladies

of the Household of a secondary rank. But, inasmuch that it derives its origin from the devotion of a Lady, as illustrious for her virtues as a woman, as for her rank as Queen of this Empire, for the Memory of a Great and Good Husband (the Father of our Kings to be).

The Order of "Victoria and Albert," was instituted on the 10th of February, 1862, by Queen Victoria, to commemorate Her Majesty's Marriage with ALBERT THE GOOD. Thus runs the preamble:—

"VICTORIA, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith. To all to whom these presents shall come, greeting: Whereas, We, taking into our Royal consideration, the Happiness which We have experienced in Our married state, for a period of more than twenty-one years, and the blessings which it hath pleased Almighty God to bestow upon Us, and our dearly-beloved and ever to be lamented Husband, His Royal Highness FRANCIS ALBERT AUGUSTUS CHARLES EMANUEL, THE PRINCE CONSORT, Duke of Saxony and Prince of Saxe-Coburg Gotha, have resolved to commemorate OUR Happy Marriage by the Institution of a FAMILY Order of Distinction, to be enjoyed by OUR Most Dear Children, the Princesses of OUR ROYAL HOUSE, and upon such other Princesses upon whom we, from time to time, shall think fit to confer the same, agreeably to the rules and regulations hereinafter declared: Now, know Ye, that for the purpose of carrying this OUR resolution into effect, We have instituted, constituted, and created, and by these PRESENTS, for US, OUR HEIRS, and SUCCESSORS, do institute, constitute, and create an Order of Distinction, to be known and have for ever hereafter the name, style, and designation of

THE ROYAL ORDER

OF VICTORIA AND ALBERT.

And we are graciously pleased to make, ordain, and establish the following rules and ordinances for the government of the same, and which shall from henceforth be invariably observed and kept."

These rules are, as commanded and ordained by HER MAJESTY, as Sovereign of the new Order,

1. That every 10th of February shall be deemed the Anniversary of the Institution of THE ORDER OF VICTORIA AND ALBERT.

2. That the Kings and Queens Regnant of Great Britain for all time shall be the Sovereigns thereof.

3. That it shall be competent for Her Majesty and her successors to confer the decoration of the Order upon such of the female descendants and wives of the

male descendants of QUEEN VICTORIA and ALBERT THE GOOD, as they shall think fit.

4. That their Royal Highnesses the Crown Princess and of Prussia (The Princess Royal of England), the Princess Alice (Princess Louis of Hesse) shall be the first members of the Royal (FAMILY) ORDER OF VICTORIA AND ALBERT.

5. So—characteristically of our good Queen—it is also ordered that from, and immediately after the solemn rite of Confirmation shall have been received by OUR other Most DEAR DAUGHTERS according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England, they shall become eligible to be nominated by US, OUR HEIRS and SUCCESSORS, members of the said Order.

6. The Queens and Princesses of Foreign Houses connected by blood or amity shall be eligible to be admitted to same Order.

7. That the decoration of the Order shall consist of an ONYX CAMBIO having the effigies of Her Majesty and her Beloved Royal Consort conjointly therein, in an ornamental oval set with diamonds, surmounted by an Imperial Crown in precious stones, attached to a white moire Riband of an inch and a half in width, tied in a bow, and shall be worn on the left shoulder.

8. That the Order shall be conferred by personal investiture with the Insignia upon such Queens and Princesses as the Sovereign Regnant may please to appoint.—In the absence from England, however, of any such illustrious personage, it shall be competent for the reigning Sovereign to transmit the Decoration of the Order, with an autograph letter.

9. The expense attending the Order shall be borne by the Sovereign, or by the Sovereign and Queen Consort jointly.—The Decoration, on the demise of the holder, to be returned to the Sovereign, saving and excepting in the case of their Royal Highnesses the Crown Princess of Prussia, and the Princess Alice, who had, prior to the establishment of these regulations, received the Decoration from Her Majesty.

10. That a Register shall be kept, in which the names of the Royal and illustrious Princesses who may be admitted into this Order shall be enrolled.

Lastly, Her Majesty reserves to herself, and her successors, full power of annulling, altering, abrogating, augmenting, interpreting, or dispensing with these regulations, or any portion thereof.

So far the Institution of this FAMILY Order of Distinction of VICTORIA AND ALBERT.

Since then, however, Her Majesty has graciously thought fit to create and establish two other classes of THE ROYAL ORDER OF VICTORIA AND ALBERT.

The First, as we have stated, being for PRINCESSES

of the BLOOD OF VICTORIA AND ALBERT. The Second, for the Mistress of the Robes, Lady of the Bedchamber, or any other lady holding office in the household of the Queen Regnant or Consort of these realms.

Thus it is ordered that the Decoration of the Second Class shall be similar to the First, except that it shall be smaller, ornamented with pearls and diamonds and the Imperial Crown enamelled in proper colours.

The Third Class is to be conferred upon such ladies as have held, or do hold, the office of Bedchamberwoman or other office in the Royal Household.

The decoration of the Third Class shall consist of an oval-shaped monogram, composed of the letters V. P. and A. in gold, pierced and ornamented with pearls and diamonds, suspended from an Imperial Crown, enamelled in proper colours and ornamented with diamonds, attached to a white moire ribbon, and shall be worn in the same manner as those appertaining to the First and Second Classes.

One regulation we have omitted—viz., that every member of the Order shall, when presented with the Insignia of the Order, give a written undertaking and promise for the due return of the Decoration of THE ROYAL ORDER OF VICTORIA AND ALBERT, to the Sovereign of the said Order in the event of decease.

So far the Royal (Family) Order of Victoria and Albert. It must not, however, be forgotten that by the lamented Prince Consort's advice Her Majesty, about the close of the Crimean campaign, instituted that VICTORIA CROSS which is worn upon the breast of private and general, and—even the civilian, for acts of distinguished gallantry in the field.

Again Her Majesty, with marvellous wisdom, sought to gain the love of our Indian fellow subjects by the institution of the Order of the STAR OF INDIA. May we hope that some day there will be an Order of distinction conferable upon men distinguished in Literature, Art, and Science?

The last gracious act of Her Majesty is the institution of the ALBERT MEDAL, to be awarded for gallantry in saving life at sea, and of which we are also enabled to present to our readers a drawing.

THE ALBERT MEDAL.

This medal is a copper-bronze garter, edged with gold, and bearing an inscription in gold, in relief. The monogram is in gold, behind which lies a plaque of blue enamel. The surmounting Albert crown is also of bronze, picked out with gold. The attaching ribbon is of dark blue, with two white stripes.

The medal is from a design by Mr. Jemmett Browne, of the Wreck Department of the Board of Trade. Mr. Browne has been known as an amateur artist of much promise.

The following is the Royal warrant instituting the new order:—

Victoria R.—Victoria, by the grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith, &c., to all to whom these presents shall come, greeting:—

Whereas, we, taking into our Royal consideration that great loss of life is sustained by reason of shipwrecks and other perils of the sea, and taking also into consideration the many daring and heroic actions performed by mariners and others to prevent such loss, and to save the lives of those who are in danger of perishing by reason of wrecks and perils of the sea; and taking, also, into consideration the expediency of distinguishing such efforts by some mark of our Royal favour:—Now, for the purpose of attaining an end so desirable as that of rewarding such actions as aforesaid, we have instituted and created, and by these presents for us, our heirs and successors, institute and create a new decoration, which we are desirous should be highly prized and eagerly sought after, and are graciously pleased to make, ordain, and establish the following rules and ordinances for the government of the same, which shall from henceforth be inviolably observed and kept:—

1. It is ordained that the distinction shall be styled "The Albert Medal," and shall consist of a gold oval-shaped badge or decoration, enamelled in dark blue, with a monogram composed of the letters V. and A. interlaced, with an anchor erect, in gold, surrounded with a garter, in bronze, inscribed in raised letters of gold "For gallantry in saving life at sea," and surmounted by a representation of the crown of his Royal Highness the lamented Prince Consort, and suspended from a dark blue ribbon of five eighths of an inch width, with two white longitudinal stripes.

2. It is ordained that the medal shall be suspended from the left breast.

3. It is ordained that the names of those upon whom we may be pleased to confer the decoration shall be published in the London Gazette, and a registry thereof kept in the Office of the Board of Trade.



[THE ALBERT MEDAL.]

4. It is ordained that any one who, after having received the medal, again performs an act which, if he had not received such medal, would have entitled him to it, such further act shall be recorded by a bar attached to the ribbon by which the medal is suspended, and for every such additional act an additional bar may be added.

5. It is ordained that the medal shall only be awarded to those who, after the date of this instrument, have, in saving, or endeavouring to save, the lives of others from shipwreck or other peril of the sea, endangered their own lives; and that such award shall be made only on a recommendation to us by the President of the Board of Trade.

6. In order to make such additional provision as shall effectually preserve pure this most honourable distinction, it is ordained that if any person on whom such distinction is conferred be guilty of any crime or disgraceful conduct which, in our judgment, disqualifies him for the said decoration, his name shall forthwith be erased from the registry of individuals upon whom the said decoration shall have been conferred by an especial warrant under our Royal sign manual, and his medal shall be forfeited; and every person to whom the said medal is given shall, before receiving the same, enter into an engagement to return the same if his name shall be so erased as aforesaid under this regulation. It is hereby further declared that we, our heirs and successors, shall be the sole judges of the circumstance demanding such expulsion; moreover, we shall at all times have power to restore such persons as may at any time have been expelled to the enjoyment of the decoration.

The issue of the new medal is inaugurated by conferring it upon the actor in the heroic deed recorded in the following paragraph:—

On Friday, the 23rd March, during a heavy gale from the south-west, a barque was observed close in shore endeavouring to weather the Start Point; failing to do this, she came ashore on the Prawle rocks, half a mile to the west of Start Lighthouse. Mr. Popplestone, the occupier of the Start estate, who had been anxiously watching this ill-fated ship, and who was the only witness of the disaster in this lonely spot, proceeded at once over the precipitous cliffs; and with a rope succeeded in saving three of the crew at the imminent risk of his own life—one sea having washed him off the rock, but in the returning wave he regained his footing. The vessel proved to be the Spirit of the Ocean, E. Cary, master, registered 550 tons, bound for Halifax. She struck on the rocks at half-past six p.m. and parted amidships, immediately on striking, the fore part, in which were the crew, turning over keel upwards; the passengers, being in the stern of the vessel, were all drowned in the poop cabin. The sole survivor from that part of the ship was the mate, who was rescued from his perilous position at ten p.m. by Mr. Popplestone, with

the assistance of the coastguard, who arrived at eight from the Tor-cross station with their rocket apparatus. Of the crew, only Oughton Jenkins (mate), William Impett (boatswain), and Muller and another German (seamen) are saved.

A LIGHTHOUSE SHAKEN BY AN EARTHQUAKE.—The Flugga Rock, situated about a mile and a half from the north shore of North Uist, in Shetland, the most northern portion of Her Majesty's dominions, was visited by an earthquake on the 9th ult. The rock, of a conical form, rises 180 ft. and is surmounted by a lighthouse. The light-keeper gives the following report of the occurrence:—"On the 9th ult., when I was on watch in the light-room, at 1.20 a.m., the tower began to shake terribly, and Crow and Sutherland (the assistant light-keepers) called up to me from the bed-room to see what was the matter, as the tower was shaking. I had not power to answer them, for the red shades commenced to rattle, and were like to be shaken out of their frames, the shaking lasting thirty seconds. There was no wind nor sea to cause the tower to shake, and we think it must have been the shock of an earthquake."

ANCIENT CITIES DISCOVERED.—The American Department of State has received despatches from the Consul at Tobasco, Mexico, dated January 3, 1866, in which he communicated the discovery of the ruins of two ancient cities, which have remained unknown since the days of the Conquest. The first, he says, from its topography and situation, he is led to believe is one occupied by Cortez at the time of his invasion of Tobasco, and is situated about fifteen miles to the west of Frontera, a town at the mouth of Tobasco or Grijalva river; the other is situated in the north-eastern portion of the State, nearly opposite the present city of Laguna de Los Terminos, and was known before the Conquest as Xicocones. The traditions connected with it trace its origin to a period at least two hundred years before the Christian era.

A CURIOUS MENAGE has just been established in the Jardin des Plantes. In an iron cage have been placed a young lioness, an Algerian wild boar, and a little dog. This last is quite the master, the lioness generally amusing herself with teasing the boar. When, however, the lioness goes too far the dog interferes and re-establishes order.

MICROSCOPIC WONDERS OF THE DEEP.—Amongst the objects which crowd the ocean, is the family of minute plants called Diatomaceae:—"The pieces or joints of which these plants are composed are called frustules; and each frustule consists of a single cell, whose coat is composed of a very delicate membrane made of organized silica. That these plants have thus the power of withdrawing silica, or flint earth in some manner from the waters of the sea, and fixing it in their tissues, is certain, but the exact method in which this is effected has not been ascertained. A remarkable point in their history results from this power of feeding on flint. It is this: their bodies are indestructible. Thus, their constantly accumulating remains are gradually deposited in strata, under the waters of the sea as well as in lakes and ponds. At first, the effect produced by things so small—thousands of which might be contained in a drop, and millions packed together in a cubic inch, may appear of trifling moment, when speaking of so grand an operation as the deposition of submarine strata. But as each moment has its value in the measurement of time, to whatever extent of ages the succession may be prolonged, so each of these atoms has a definite relation to space, and their constant production and deposition will at length result in mountains. The examination of the most ancient of the stratified rocks, and of all others in the ascending scale, and the investigation of deposits now in course of formation, teach us that from the first dawn of animated nature up to the present hour, this prolific family has never ceased its activity. England may boast that the sun never sets upon her empire, but here is an ocean realm whose subjects are literally more numerous than the sands of the sea. We cannot count them by millions simply, but by hundreds of thousands of millions. Indeed, it is futile to speak of numbers in relation to things so unaccountable. Extensive rocky strata, chains of hills, beds of marl, almost every description of soil, whether superficial or raised from a greater depth, contain the remains of this little plant in greater or less abundance. Some great tracts of country are literally built up of their skeletons. No country is destitute of such monuments, and in some they constitute the leading features in the structure of the soil. The world is a vast catcomb of Diatomaceae; nor is the growth of those old dwellers on our earth diminished in its latter days."—Dr. Harvey's Sea-side Book.

MISS BITTY ALIVE AGAIN.—The Berlin journals contain the following curious paragraph:—"A Hungarian girl, born at Odenbourg without hands, now twenty years of age, has been giving some curious representations in the Prussian capital. She performs with her mouth the functions of hands. She sews, embroiders, executes the most delicate work with pearls, even threads her needles, and makes knots, all with the tongue, apparently without difficulty, and certainly without the assistance of anyone."

BRITOMARTE, THE MAN-HATER.

By E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH,

Author of "Self-Made," "All Alone," etc., etc.

CHAPTER LI.

Sound, sound the clarion—fill, fill the fife!

To all the sensual world proclaim,

One crowded hour of glorious strife

Is worth an age without a name!

Texas bustle in the street below—

"Forward! march!" and forth they go!

Steeds neigh and trample all around—

Steel rings, spears glitter, trumpets sound!

Young Ethel remained the honoured guest of the old paragon. He had been relieved of the command of the Sea Scourge and promoted to the rank of first lieutenant, and he was now waiting orders.

But neither arguments nor entreaties could induce Miss Conyers to profit by the large-hearted hospitality of the Rosenthals, and take up even a temporary residence under their roof.

She found cheap board in a respectable private family, in the suburbs, near the paragon, and she visited her friends very often, and went every day with Erminie to the hospital.

Justin, very soon after his return home, made known his intention of enlisting in the army.

This announcement filled the heart of his sister with dismay. All the latent pride in the gentle bosom of the Latheran minister's weak child arose in arms. For her idolized brother, she was more ambitious, and she could not endure the thought of the hardships, privations and humiliations he would have to suffer as a soldier.

Justin went and enlisted in a new regiment that was being formed to go to India.

And his sister saw no more of him for a week; at the end of which he re-appeared at the paragon with his fine suburban hair cropped close to his head and surmounted by the soldier's cap, and his athletic form displayed to the very best advantage in his uniform.

The three young ladies were alone in the drawing-room when he was ushered in in this dress.

Half laughing and half crying, Erminie sprang to welcome him.

With visible emotion Britomarte also offered him her hand.

And Elsie openly expressed her opinion:

"Justin, you were out for a soldier! I never saw you look so well in my life. But then the close-fitting uniform certainly does show off 'a fine figure of a man,' as no other dress in the world could. Somehow or other, I think of a gladiator, and of an Apollo, and the Colossus of Rhodes, when I look at you in that tight fit, Mr. Rosenthal."

"Miss Fielding, I am your slave and your knight. Were it permitted in the ranks, I would pin your glove upon my cap for a leather!" said Justin, laughing and bowing.

"No, don't! Britomarte would put a spider in my cap!"

"Elsie!" indignantly exclaimed Miss Conyers.

"You know you'd poison me if I should dare to—hem—be a friend of Justin's! Oh, I know! I've read the story of the dog in the manger! how the dog couldn't eat the hay and wouldn't let the heifer eat it!" laughed the girl.

"You are privileged to jest roughly, I suppose," said Miss Conyers, coldly.

"I know I am," admitted Elsie—"privileged to do everything but flirt with Justin. If I was to dare to do that—hush, girls! you know how Britty can hate men, but you will never know how she can hate women until some unlucky woman gives Justin her glove to wear in his cap!—Mercy! there, I've done!" exclaimed Elsie, shrinking from Britomarte's flashing eyes.

"And now we'll change the subject."

Britomarte boarded with a widow of the name of Barton, who had three grown daughters. They lived in a small white cottage, in a large, shady garden in the north-eastern suburbs of the city, and not very far from the paragon.

The mother and daughters supported themselves by taking in plain sewing. As Britomarte was their only coarder, and was contented to share their own simple and frugal meals, her living was inexpensive, and she paid for it by needlework.

Every hour of the day that she did not devote to visiting with Erminie, was employed in this work, and the stroke of midnight often found her still at her needle.

And yet, with all this industry, Britomarte could scarcely make enough to pay her small expenses.

Justin and Erminie guessed all this, and felt great but vain regret; for so long as Miss Conyers remained so obstinately proud and independent, they could do nothing on earth to assist her.

"It seems to me," complained Erminie, "that if I were in Britomarte's place, I would allow those who love me to improve my condition."

"You cannot understand her, and I do not blame her," answered Justin.

Once Erminie said:

"Britomarte, dearest, if you will be so independent, why can you not be so in a more agreeable way—agreeable to yourself? Why do you not give music lessons?"

"Because, my dear, I only want transient work, something that I can give up at any moment without wronging any one."

"But what do you mean by that, Britomarte?"

"My stay in London is short and uncertain."

"Oh, pray don't say that. Where will you go?"

"I do not know, dear," answered Miss Conyers, in that grave tone that forbade further cross-questioning.

So Erminie sighed and fell into silence.

Britomarte was now so closely engaged that she seldom got time to spend an evening at the paragon. Something like a fortnight had elapsed since that evening when she had taken tea with Erminie, and laughed at Justin for his mere camp promotions; and since then she had not visited their house.

One afternoon she sat diligently sewing, when Mrs. Burton came up to her room and told her that there was an old man below asking to speak to her.

She went down stairs and found Bob, who handed her a note from Erminie.

It was very short, and ran thus:

"DEAR BRITOMARTE.—Please come to me at once, for I am in great distress. ERMINIE."

"What is the matter, Bob?" she inquired.

"Is there anything amiss at your house?"

"No, ma'am, not as I know of. Miss Erminie is crying, but I ain't heard no bad news."

Britomarte ran up to her room, and put on her bonnet and shawl, and came down and joined the old servant, and started for the paragon.

But her first steps soon distanced his feeble ones, and she arrived at the house first, and hurried immediately to the library, where she found Erminie in tears.

"What is it all, my dearest?" inquired Miss Conyers, throwing off her bonnet and shawl, and taking Erminie in her arms.

"Oh, Britomarte, I have no courage at all when the test comes," sobbed Erminie, dropping her head upon the bosom of her friend.

"But what is it, dearest?" again inquired Miss Conyers, with a misgiving heart.

"Oh, can't you imagine? Oh, Britomarte, Justin is to leave this evening."

Even Britomarte for an instant recoiled under the blow, but in another she rallied and replied:

"That is well. We don't want any more camp heroes, Erminie."

"But it is sudden. True, we were expecting this, or rather hearing of it, every day. But it had got to be an old story. I began to think that he would remain in England, when about an hour ago came an orderly sergeant with this note from Justin—listen to it," said Erminie, unfolding a little note and reading:

"MY DEAREST SISTER.—We have received our orders. We go by the six o'clock boat this afternoon. I will try to see you before we leave. If I cannot get to the house, will you be at the wharf? And as you love me, send for Britomarte, and prevail on her to remain with you at the house, or accompany you to the wharf, as the case may require. Heaven bless you both. JUSTIN."

"It is now two o'clock. Shall you stay here or go to the wharf?" inquired Britomarte, in a tremulous tone.

"I shall remain here until five o'clock. If he does not come before that hour, I shall know that he will not come at all, and that the only chance we shall have of taking leave of him will be at the wharf," replied Erminie.

"My darling, if he is not here within a very few moments, he will not be here at all; for you know he must leave himself time enough after visiting you to get back."

"That is true. Still, it is not worth while for us to leave the house before five o'clock, as they will not be at the boats before half-past five," said Erminie.

"You are right," agreed Britomarte.

"And oh! I still hope that he may come here. It will be dreadful to have to bid him good-bye at the wharf, in the multitude of men. But if I do have to go to the wharf, you will go with me, Britomarte?" pleaded Erminie.

"Certainly," replied Miss Conyers.

"And oh! Britty, Britty, if you would only give him a little hope—a little hope to cheer him on his way."

"Don't speak of it, Erminie. I would die for your brother rather than sacrifice my principles so far."

Erminie sighed and forbore to reply.

Even while she spoke, the door bell rang sharply.

"That is Justin!" she exclaimed, springing to her feet and running out to meet him.

Britomarte remained pale and breathless where Erminie had left her.

There was a sound of meeting, and of sobbing, and of cheering words, and then the brother and sister entered the library.

Britomarte arose and gave her hand to Justin. He pressed it in silence. They could not trust themselves to speak just then.

"How long—how long can you stay with us, my brother?" said Erminie, striving hard to control her emotion and to speak with composure.

"I may remain with you until five o'clock, dearest."

"Thank heaven for so much grace!" replied Erminie, as she turned and left the room.

She went out from a two-fold motive—to order a dainty dinner prepared, so that they all might partake of one more meal together, and also to give her brother the opportunity of making one more last appeal to his obstinate love.

When they were alone together, Justin and Britomarte remained for a few moments silent and motionless.

Both were too full of suppressed emotion to trust themselves to move or speak.

Justin was the first to master himself. When he had done so, he approached Britomarte, stood before her a moment, and then taking her hand, said, in a tone thrilled with passion:

"I promised you never again to speak of the subject nearest my heart."

"Then keep your promise, Justin," she said, in a gentle, solemn voice.

"You will not free me from it?"

"I cannot."

"Britomarte!"

"Well!"

"Do you know why, after so long a delay, we have at length received such sudden orders to India?"

Britomarte started as if she had suddenly received a stab; but quickly recovered herself.

He took her hand, and sought to read her face; but she turned away her head to conceal the emotion she could not quite control.

They were interrupted by Elsie, dancing into the room.

"So you are really off, are you, Justin?" she inquired, giving him her hand.

"Yes, Elsie—really off at last," replied Justin, smiling.

Erminie, hearing the voices in the library, thought it would be of no use for her to remain out any longer, depriving herself of her brother's society.

So she came in. And after that the conversation, under the auspices of Elsie, became general and cheerful.

A very nice dinner was served at four o'clock. And Justin and the three young ladies sat down to it together.

Major Fielding and Lieutenant Ethel were not at home, and not expected before six o'clock.

After dinner Erminie sent out for a carriage.

"You must let us ride down to the wharf with you, Justin, and see you off," said his sister.

"Yes, yes—it is just what I wish," he answered.

"Britomarte, dear Britomarte, you, too, will go with us," pleaded Erminie.

"Of course, I shall, love," murmured Miss Conyers, in reply.

"Elsie, dear, I know that you must stay here to receive your father when he comes in to dinner, else I would ask you also to go with us," said Erminie.

"Thanks for nothing!" laughed Elsie. "I can't go, and I don't want to go; and as Captain Rosenthal is neither my brother nor my lover, there is no necessity for me to go."

The carriage was at the door at five o'clock.

Justin took leave of Elsie, left his regards for Major Fielding and Lieutenant Ethel, and then entered the carriage where Britomarte and Erminie were already seated.

A half hour's rapid driving brought them to the steamboat wharf, which was now a scene of great excitement.

The troops were embarking; and a great number of

people—relatives, friends, and even mere acquaintances—were assembled to see them off.

The regiments were embarked by companies. And while one company would be passing on to the boat in files, those remaining on the wharf were "at rest."

Some were devouring fruit and cakes at the stands on the ground; some were shaking hands with friends; and others, many others, were bidding good-bye to mothers, wives, sisters, or sweethearts, assembled there, "to see the last of them."

In the crowd one boy attracted Britomarte's attention.

Though he wore the uniform of a soldier, he did not seem to be more than fifteen years of age. A bright, spirited-looking lad he was, but he seemed quite alone in that crowd.

No one accosted him, and he spoke to none. Britomarte watched him with some interest.

"He belongs to my company," said Justin.

Britomarte and Erminie now got out of their carriage and stood with Justin, until the company immediately before his own fell into order to embark. Then it was the turn of Justin's company to form.

"I must leave now, Erminie! be a woman, my little girl!" said Justin, hastily but fervently pressing his sister to his bosom.

"Heaven bless you! Oh, heaven bless you, my brother!" she cried, trying hard to swallow and keep down her sobs and tears.

"Good-bye, Britomarte!" said Justin, solemnly, giving her his hand.

"Good-bye!—May heaven strengthen your arm, and preserve your life, and send you back with victory! Good-bye!" she answered, wringing his hand and dropping it, and turning away her head to hide the strong emotion all but too manifest in her countenance.

A sigh reached her ear, and then the piteous words:

"Well, there is no one in the world to bid me good-bye, or ask Heaven to bless me. Oh, well, so much the better may be, for if I'm killed there'll be nobody's feelings hurt!"

Britomarte looked up.

It was the lonely boy who had spoken, and now he stood there with a smile that was more touching than tears could have been.

Britomarte's pity moved for the friendless lad.

"Yes, my boy, I will bid you good-bye, and pray Heaven to bless you, and to bring you back to us safe!" she said, taking the lad's hand, stooping and pressing a kiss upon his brow.

Justin saw it all; but not a shade of jealousy clouded his own mind. He understood Britomarte too well.

"Heaven bless you for that, noble woman!" he whispered. "I will look after the lad as though he were my younger brother, or yours."

And these were Justin's parting words to Britomarte.

While he was leading his men on to the boat, Britomarte and Erminie returned to the carriage, where they sat watching until the few remaining companies embarked, and the boat got up her steam, and steamed away from the wharf.

Even then they continued to watch the boat as long as she remained in sight.

And finally they gave the order to drive back to the personage. When they arrived, Erminie tried to persuade Britomarte to alight and go in; but in vain. Miss Conyers felt that she needed the solitude of her own chamber.

"Go in, dear Erminie. Elsie and her father will cheer you up this evening. To-morrow I will come to you," she said, embracing her friend, and then drawing her veil over her face and turning her steps homeward. Britomarte reached her residence and entered the neat little parlor where the landlady and her daughters were seated at tea.

Mrs. Burton arose in a little bustle to get another cup and saucer, and saying, apologetically:

"We waited an hour for you, Miss Conyers, and then we concluded that you were spending the evening with your friends, and so we thought we would have our tea. But I will make some fresh for you in a moment."

"No—pry do not disturb yourself. I can not take anything just now. By-and-bye, may be, I may come down and make a cup for myself," said Britomarte, passing hastily through the parlour to the back room, from which the stairs ascended to her own chamber.

Arrived there, she bolted herself in, threw off her bonnet and shawl, and dropped down upon her bed, in a collapse of all her enthusiasm, and wept bitterly.

For nearly three years she had been the constant companion of Justin, under circumstances that threw them entirely upon each other for mutual comfort and support; and the love that had first been inspired by his high personal excellence was now confirmed by habit.

Since they had returned to their native country,

and mingled freely with their fellow-creatures, each little event that had come between herself and her lover, to part them even for a day, had been felt like the stroke of a cleaving sword dividing her bosom.

Even the first little parting in the city, when she went temporarily to a hotel, and he went to his home, a few streets off, was a sharp pain, although she knew that she would see him every day.

The second parting, when he enlisted, was a much sharper pain, for she knew that she should see him only every week at oftener.

But now this parting was insupportable agony, for she felt that she might not see him for years, if indeed she should ever see him again.

Mourning and weeping in her anguish and despair, she now realized how utterly her soul had passed into the soul of her lover, so that she lived only in his life.

Yes, only in his life. Lifeless, except in its painful half-consciousness of death, seemed her own being; lifeless the great, populous city; lifeless the long lines of occupied forts; lifeless all, because he was no longer in the midst. While away down the broad river, somewhere, in one man's bosom, beat the heart of all life for her.

An insupportable sense of suffocation, like the being stifled with grave-cloids, overwhelmed her. She struggled up and threw open the windows of her room for air.

But it was a subtler air than any in her reach that she needed for her relief. And an intolerable longing to be near him, to be with him at all costs, seized her.

She felt that she could not breathe apart from him; that there could be no evil in this world come to her so great as this evil of separation from him; that there was nothing could be compared with it; nothing could be weighed against it; no cause on earth could or need justify such a mortal severance.

Without him, the fairest, brightest scenes of earth would be to her as lifeless and as gloomy as the charnel house, while with him any scene would be endurable.

In the great bitterness of her anguish, she repented that she had not married him, and gone with him to the field.

That would have been happiness, and the only happiness possible for her. But then she was pledged to abjure his whole sex in the way of love or marriage.

In the midst of her impassioned aspirations she stopped short, sat down, and put her hands to her temples and took herself to task.

"Am I mad or morbid?" she inquired. "All this must be wrong and extravagant. There are thousands and thousands of wives who are parted from their husbands, and girls who are parted from their lovers every day, and they are very cheerful over it."

And she arose and put back the dark tresses of her hair, while a wonderful calmness and resolution settled her stormy features into stillness.

CHAPTER. LXI.

Danger, long travel, want, and woe
Soon change the form that best we knew;
For deadly fear can time outgo,
And blanch at once the hair;
Hard time can roughen form and face,
And what can quench the eye's bright grace,
Nor days old age a wrinkle trace
More deeply than despair. Scott.

ERMINIE grieved bitterly over the departure of her brother.

The next morning she had no time to grieve. A busy and exciting day was before her.

Early in the forenoon Lieutenant Ethel, with earnestly grateful acknowledgements of the affectionate hospitality he had enjoyed for so many weeks, took a sorrowful leave of the personage.

It is true that he need not have hurried away to join his ship.

But a fine sense of delicacy suggested to him a certain impropriety in his remaining the guest of a house where there were only two young ladies left to entertain him.

So he took leave a few hours previous to the departure of Major Fielding.

"I feel really sorry that he is gone. He is a gentlemanly young officer," said Erminie, looking after the hawk that was conveying him to the railway-station.

"Yes, but he was a nuisance for all that! and I am very glad he is out of the way," said Elsie, who was standing by her side.

"Oh, Elsie, how can you say anything so unkind!"

"It isn't unkind; it is true."

"He never was in my way."

"No, because you are so methodical—you never can be put out by anything. You rise, dress, eat, walk, read, and sleep by rule. Now, I'm different. I

like to sail all over the house in a loose wrapper without the danger of meeting with one of the missest of Christians."

Erminie's thoughts had wandered to Britomarte so she let her wild companion rattle on unheeded and almost unheard.

She reflected that Britomarte had spoken of calling to see her in the course of this day. Now the day was nearly over, and Miss Conyers had not come.

"And I tell you what, Erminie, this is freedom. No more adding our brains over incessant changes of dishes to suit their exacting appetites. Lor, Erminie, if it were not for the men, we would never trouble our heads with the study of a new omelette, or a new sauce or gravy, would we? But those gormandizing animals, you know, they think of nothing on earth all day long but their blessed stomachs, unless it is their bothering shirt buttons! I really do believe we women were the original creations, and men were afterwards inflicted on us in punishment of our sins. They are such torments, Minie. And now they are all gone we shall have a glorious old time! And I'm going to begin mine by—"

Here a sharp, loud, impatient ringing of the door-bell put a sudden stop to the conversation.

"That's Britomarte, now," exclaimed Erminie, starting up.

"No, it isn't. It's not her ring," cried Elsie.

Then both paused and listened while Old Bob opened the door.

A minute passed, and then the library door was opened by the old man, who announced:

"Madame Vittorio Corseni!"

And to the unbounded astonishment of the two girls, she who was once Alberta Goldsborough entered the room.

"Oh, Alberta! Alberta! I am so glad to see you. Love!" exclaimed Erminie, impulsively springing up to meet with an overflowing welcome her beloved old schoolmate. "You are welcome! welcome! thrice welcome! to my heart and home, Alberta. Sit down, love, and rest here, and let me take off your wrappings," she said, gently forcing her visitor into the easiest chair, and tenderly untying and removing her bonnet.

"You wonder at seeing me here?" said Alberta.

"No, indeed; I wonder at nothing in these days," smiled Erminie.

"I must tell you, however, why I have intruded upon you."

"Your visit is no intrusion, and you shall tell me nothing more, dear Alberta, until you are rested and refreshed. Tea will be ready very soon, and after you have had it, you shall share my chamber, and in its privacy tell me what you like. Just now it is enough for me to see that you are weary and sorrowful."

A strange, discordant laugh broke from Alberta's pallid lips, and jarred harshly upon the ears of her hearers.

Erminie felt that she would rather have seen her weep than heard her laugh so strangely. Her act was too much like hysteria or even madness.

The girls had been sitting in the light of the fire, which the chill of the early autumn evening rendered very welcome.

But now Erminie arose and lighted the gas. And then they saw their visitor plainly.

Alberta was awfully changed, and Erminie shuddered as she gazed on her. Her dress was all black, but rusty and travel-stained. Her face and form were still beautiful, but the "glory" of their beauty was "obscured." Her once oval face was lengthened and hollowed, her perfect features pinched and sharpened; her fair complexion sunburnt, her brilliant hair faded, her graceful form emaciated.

"Oh, how much you seem to want repose! Stay with me and rest, oh, poor, storm-beaten friend!" murmured Erminie, gently caressing her visitor.

"I knew that you were humane and tender-hearted, Erminie, and I felt encouraged to come to you—to you of all the world—in the hour of my distress."

"You are down, I see," said Elsie, "but blast if I know whether you have fallen down, or whether you have crouched down for a fatal spring! By the gleam of your eyes, Alberta, I should say the latter."

"Don't mind Elsie, dear. She is rightly named. She is an elf—a tricky spirit. She mocks at everything, even, alas! at her own father!" said Erminie.

"I do not heed her since you trust me," replied Alberta.

"I am expecting Britomarte every moment; and when she comes, we four, who used to be called the 'Belles of Bellemont,' and to be inseparable companions, will be together once more—be together for the first time since that happy summer we spent together at your father's lovely home, 'The Rainbows.'"

"That happy summer before the war. Oh heaven! 'Sorrow's crown of sorrow is the memory of happier days,'" said Alberta, mournfully.

"Be comforted. You are young yet, and the happy days may return again," said Erminie, kindly. And she rang the bell and ordered the tea brought in there.

"Britomarte? I read a very strange account of her having been shipwrecked upon a desert island in the Indian Ocean, and rescued. Was it true?"

"It was all true—every word of it," said Erminie.

The tea service was brought in and arranged upon the neat table. And the three young women seated themselves at it.

Erminie presided over the urn.

"Oh, Alberta! what a fate for you, delicately reared as you have been! But it is all over now, love; you have come in to us and all will be well!" said Erminie.

"But you have not heard my story yet," murmured Alberta.

"I will hear it very soon; and no matter what it is, or has been, now that you are with us, Alberta, I will hold you to my heart of hearts," said Erminie.

They finished drinking tea and arose from the table.

And still Britomarte did not make her appearance.

"She will not be here to-night! It is now too late to expect her," said Erminie, as she rang for a servant to come and remove the tea service.

"Now, Alberta, dear, I will show you to our room. Come dear," she said, leading the way from the library followed by her guest.

(To be continued.)

AN OFFICIAL BLUNDER.

SHORTLY after the establishment of the Empire of Napoleon the Third, it became necessary for the government to be on its guard, to thwart the plots which the Socialists were organizing against it in every part of the country.

One morning, Eugene Laramie, who had been told by his chief a few days before to hold himself in readiness to obey a summons from the government, received a message to attend a certain high official without delay. Upon repairing to the presence of that personage he was received politely.

"Monsieur Laramie," said the official, "the Chief of the Secret Police has designated you as the person most deserving the confidence of the government in conducting certain matters of importance. A conspiracy against the state is known to be in existence. Our suspicions have been aroused by this paper, which was found in the street in front of the residence of Count —, the ambassador of —. You must put us in possession of the remaining facts in the case."

As he spoke he handed the young man a small perfumed sheet of note paper, containing only the sentence, "Rivoli. 48. 10. 6. 53."

"May not this be merely an assignation, instead of the evidence of a conspiracy?" asked Laramie, smiling.

"Monsieur Laramie," replied the official, shrugging his shoulders, "the government has an especial reason for believing itself to be right in this matter. It can give you no clue but this paper."

Taking the hint so given, Laramie left the official to his duties, and started out to think over the task assigned him. It certainly promised to be very difficult. He had only an unintelligible paper to work upon, and the government expected him to discover the whole matter. Laramie was a shrewd man, and now that he felt that his reputation was at stake, he resolved to exert himself to the utmost to succeed.

The paper was found in front of the residence of the ambassador from —, whose government was known to be hostile to the empire.

Remembering this, Laramie proceeded to the office of his chief, and procured a complete list of the entire legation, from the minister himself down to the humblest attaché.

He studied this, and watched the mansion containing the parties for a couple of days, but without being any the wiser for his trouble.

"Why shouldn't it be an assignation, after all?" he asked himself, going back to his original idea. "Why shouldn't Rivoli stand for Rue Rivoli, and forty-eight for the number of a house in that street? But then what do the other figures mean? Ha! I have it," a sudden inspiration flashing through his mind. "Ten stands for the tenth of the month, six for the sixth month, which is June, and fifty-three for the year. There, I have the whole sentence—Forty-eight Rue Rivoli, tenth of June, 1863. Why, it's as plain as the nose on a man's face. It's an assignation beyond a doubt, and the ministers are worrying themselves over an effort directed at nothing but the peace of some pretty woman. I'll stake my reputation on it that I am correct. Now to see what sort of a place is number forty-eight."

Acting upon the impulse which had possessed him,

and which was one of those sudden inspirations that so often befall men trained in his profession, Laramie set off for the Rue Rivoli.

The more he thought of it, the more he felt convinced that he was right. No conspirator would have made use of so simple a cipher, and the perfumed note paper, and the delicate hand in which the sentence was written, made it plain that a woman was concerned in the matter.

Reasoning thus in his mind, he entered the Rue Rivoli, and soon came opposite the mysterious number forty-eight.

The house was a large, handsome, private residence. It was evidently the dwelling of some person of wealth, and upon inquiring of a *gendarme* who stood near by, Laramie learned that the house was the property of Monsieur D'Encourt, a wealthy banker.

Being of a very communicative nature, the *gendarme* added that Monsieur D'Encourt was a happy man, inasmuch as he was the husband of the most beautiful woman in Paris. He had married her only a year before, when she had been the reigning favourite at the Théâtre Comique.

"Ah, there she is now," he exclaimed, as a carriage drew up before the house.

Laramie was all attention, and placed himself so as to command a good view of the lady as she alighted from her carriage. She deserved all that her humble admirer had said of her. She was regally beautiful. She passed into the house almost immediately, and Laramie, after loitering about for a short while longer, left the street, and was soon in the presence of the chief of police.

"Do you know a Madame D'Encourt of this city?" he asked the chief, carelessly.

"By reputation, only. You know I have to keep myself informed concerning every one of note here."

"What is her character?"

"She is a weak, foolish woman, young enough to be her husband's daughter. She doesn't care for him at all, and married him for his money."

"Do you think her capable of conspiring against the government?"

The chief burst into a laugh.

"Nonsense, Laramie. She has too tender a feeling for a certain member of the government to seek to do it any harm. No, my friend; the only intrigues she cares to engage in threaten more harm to the repose of her husband's mind than to the emperor."

That evening Laramie posted himself at the principal entrance of the Grand Opera, having learned from Madame D'Encourt's coachman that she would be there.

At last the lady arrived. Suffering her to pass in to her box, he waited patiently until the close of the performance, and then placing himself immediately behind her, followed her towards her carriage. Just before they reached the street entrance, he took advantage of the crowd around them, and leaning towards her, said, in a low, distinct tone, "Rivoli; forty-eight; ten; six; fifty-three." She uttered a slight scream, and turned sharply around, but the detective had drawn back among the crowd. There was an anxious look on her face as she glanced around. Laramie felt convinced that he had found the writer of the mysterious note.

The next day Madame D'Encourt was informed that a man desired to speak with her. She bade the domestic show him into the room where she was seated. She glanced at him in surprise. His beard was worn much heavier than was the custom in France, and his hair was long and inclined to curl. His forehead was traversed by a deep scar, which terminated in the corner of his left eye, giving him a singular and not very attractive expression.

"You wish to see me, I believe," said the lady, as he entered.

"Madame is right. I have heard that she wishes to employ a confidential servant—one upon whose discretion she can always rely," said the man, calmly.

"Well?"

"I have come to solicit the place, feeling sure that I can give entire satisfaction."

"You? Why you look like a brigand," said the lady, laughing. "I should never sleep in peace with you in the house."

"Nevertheless," replied the man, calmly, "I do not think madame can do better."

"What are you good for? What can you do?"

"I can keep a secret, madame. I can see that a lady does not suffer from too much suspicion on the part of her husband," was the significant reply.

Madame D'Encourt's colour heightened, and she looked at the man searchingly; but he met her gaze calmly and without embarrassment.

"What is your name?" she asked, abruptly.

"Eustache Peloubert."

"Why do you wish to enter my service?"

"Why does the bright flame draw the poor moth to it, madame?" was the cool reply.

"You can flatter, I see," said the lady, laughing.

"That shows you have tact. But, mark me," she said sharply, "don't venture too near the flame. You may meet with the moth's fate."

The man bowed low, with a singular smile.

"Does madame accept me?" he asked.

"What wages do you expect?"

"I leave that to the bounty of madame."

"Then listen to me," said the lady. "I will take you into my service, for I think you will suit me. I will offer you no wages. If you please me you shall be amply rewarded. If I do not like you I will give you nothing, and will also discharge you. Does the arrangement suit you?"

"Perfectly, madame. When shall I commence?"

"To-day. You will always be in the neighbourhood of this room, unless I give other orders, so that you may be within the sound of my bell."

"Madame shall be obeyed," was the reply. And with a low bow the new domestic passed into an adjoining room, leaving Madame D'Encourt to ponder over the strange scene.

As the time wore on she liked her new servant better, and at the close of a week came to the conclusion that she had been very fortunate in securing him.

A few hours after forming this conclusion, she summoned him to her presence, and handing him a letter, said:

"Take this to its address, and wait for an answer."

Eustache took the letter, and left the room. As he entered the street he glanced at the address, and an exclamation of surprise escaped his lips.

He hastily sought the nearest café, and calling for some boiling water, held the letter over it until the gum by which the envelope was fastened was softened.

Then opening it, he took out the enclosure and read it. A strange smile overspread his features, and after a moment's hesitation he copied the letter in a small note-book which he took from his pocket. Then placing the letter back in the envelope, he re-sealed it, and in another hour had placed it in the hands of the party for whom it was intended, and had received instructions to say to his mistress that the matter should be attended to. He delivered the message promptly.

Monsieur D'Encourt had been called away to London on important business, and would be gone several days, madame said to him, when he had delivered the message.

"Eustache," she added, "the gentleman to whom you gave the letter may call this evening on business of importance. You will see that we are not interrupted. Should there be danger of such an occurrence, you will be careful to warn me promptly by three taps on the door of my boudoir."

Eustache bowed.

"Madame's will is my law," he said, quietly.

Late that evening he admitted to the presence of his mistress the gentleman he had seen in the morning.

"You will remember my instructions, Eustache," she said, as he passed out of the room.

Some hours later he was summoned to see that the way was clear for the visitor to depart unobserved. His report was favourable, and he accompanied the gentleman to the door.

"Madame has engaged you as her confidential valet, she tells me," said the stranger, as he paused for a moment at the door.

"Yes, monsieur."

"You can be trusted, I suppose?"

"I think so, monsieur."

"And you are not troubled with the faculty of recollecting things and persons that do not concern you?" And the stranger dropped a couple of bright new Napoleons into the valet's hand.

"Monsieur," said Eustache, gravely, "what passes in at one ear goes out at the other, or into my pocket."

The stranger laughed, and added:

"Very well, my good man. Act on this principle, and you will find a great deal going into your pocket."

Eustache bowed low, and the stranger disappeared in the darkness of the street. The valet stood gazing after him for awhile, softly chinking the coins in his hand, and laughing in a quiet, meditative way. Then he shut the door, and went up to his chamber, owing to his important position, was somewhat better than that occupied by the other domestics.

The next morning Eustache Peloubert left the house at an early hour, and bent his steps in the direction of the Bureau of the Secret Police.

Some hours later his mistress rang for him, but he was not to be found on the place. A few hours later still in the day, as she was impatiently awaiting his return, she was informed that a gentleman desired to speak with her immediately on important business. Very much surprised, she bade the servant admit him to her presence. He was a tall, handsome man, and bore himself with an ease and grace that impressed her favourably.

"Well, monsieur," she said, "to whom am I indebted for the honour of this visit?"

"My name is Eugene Laramie, madame," replied her visitor, bowing.

"Well, Monsieur Laramie, what is the business that you consider so important?"

"It is a matter that I would rather not trouble you with, madame. First let me say that I am one of the secret police of Paris."

Madame D'Encourt looked at him searchingly, and asked, haughtily:

"Well, monsieur, what have I to do with the police?"

"I will explain. It has become known to the authorities that you have been guilty of a great imprudence lately. The lady started and turned pale. "In short, madame, it is believed that you are engaged in a conspiracy to overthrow the government, and I have special orders from the emperor to investigate the matter."

"There is some mistake here, monsieur," said Madame D'Encourt, energetically. "The emperor has no more devoted subject than I am. What cause is there to suspect me?"

"I will tell you. A mysterious note has been found in front of the residence of a foreign minister whose government is known to be hostile to the emperor. This note has been traced to you. A short while ago you employed a domestic for a service which you did not wish to be known. You sent him with a letter to a certain gentleman of this city." Madame D'Encourt started violently. "The letter was delivered, but it was first opened and copied."

"The wretch!" exclaimed the lady—"to betray me."

"This letter," continued Laramie, not heeding the interruption, "was, like the first, written in cipher. The suspicions of the government have been very strongly excited against you, madame, and if you can explain this matter, I trust you will do so now. Otherwise it will be my duty to arrest you, and I need not tell you that I should regret that exceedingly. Here is the first letter, and a copy of the second." He laid two papers in her lap, and sat calmly waiting for her to speak.

Madame D'Encourt took the papers and glanced at them. Her face and neck grew crimson, and a faint smile hovered around her lips.

"Monsieur," she said, in a tone of relief, "I assure you these notes have no connection with a conspiracy. They do not mean the government the slightest harm. I assure you I speak truly."

"I am ready to accept your assurance, madame," said Laramie, "in my private capacity; but I have the emperor's orders to clear up the mystery, and as his servant I am compelled to require a satisfactory explanation."

"But, monsieur," urged the lady, with great embarrassment, "it is very trying to me. These notes concern a private affair of mine. I do not wish to make it public."

"It will not be made public, madame," said the detective. "I will simply report in such a manner as to save you from annoyance. But to do this I must understand the whole matter. If you do not explain to me, you will be required to do so to a court of justice."

"Ah no! not that. You are cruel, monsieur."

"Madame, I am only obeying the orders of my sovereign."

The lady buried her face in her hands for a moment in extreme embarrassment, and Laramie could see the crimson of her neck and cheeks growing deeper every moment. Suddenly she raised her head.

"Ah, well, then, monsieur," she said, speaking with a great effort, "I will explain to you, and will rely upon your honour as a man to save me from any unfortunate result to this most awkward affair."

He bowed low, and she at once entered upon her explanation, frequently pausing and covering her face with her hands to hide her confusion. When she had finished, Laramie rose.

"This is most awkward, madame," he said, calmly. "I will make my report at once, and do my best to quiet the matter, so that it shall trouble you no longer."

He bowed and left the house. Calling a fiacre, he set off for the cabinet of the official who had set him to work to ferret out the plot. Upon sending in his name, he was immediately admitted.

"Well, Monsieur Laramie," said the official, as he entered, "I trust you have been successful."

"I have succeeded far better than I expected," replied the detective, quietly, "and I am now prepared to lay the whole case before your highness."

"Aha!" exclaimed the duke (for the official was no other than a cabinet minister), rubbing his hands. "Proceed, my young Argus."

"I suspected at first," said Laramie, "that the paper was an appointment for an assignation, you remember."

"Very foolishly, too," interrupted the duke.

"Well, I started out with this idea, and at last discovered that the paper contained an appointment for a meeting of the parties concerned in the affair. Further than this, I learned the locality at which the meeting was to take place, and upon following up this knowledge, discovered that one of the principal parties concerned in the matter is a wealthy and beautiful woman now residing in Paris."

"Of course," exclaimed the duke, shrugging his shoulders; "always a woman at the bottom of every trouble."

"Having brought to light one of the parties," continued Laramie, "I was of course anxious to discover the others. Fortune seemed to favour me. I heard that the lady desired a servant, and as I was unknown to her, and there was no danger of my true character being suspected, I at once resolved to apply for the place. I did so, and was successful."

"A very shrewd fellow, I confess," said the duke. "But go on, monsieur, the story interests me."

"I had not been in her service long," Laramie went on, "before she entrusted me with a letter for a certain party. I took it and promised to deliver it with promptness. It was addressed to a peer of France, my lord duke, one high in the confidence of the emperor. I suppose it is not necessary to call names?"

"No, Monsieur Laramie," replied the duke, somewhat quieter than before, "they are not necessary."

"I opened the letter, and read it. It was in cipher, like the first, and like that, an appointment for a meeting. I copied the letter, then sealed it again, delivered it to the personage for whom it was intended, and received his answer, which I transmitted to the lady. That night I admitted the peer to the lady's presence, and stood guard during the interview. The lady's husband, my lord, is ignorant of the whole matter, and I was to give warning should he return unexpectedly. When the peer departed, he placed in my hand two Napoleons as the price of my discretion."

"He was very liberal," said the duke, dryly.

"Very liberal, my lord duke. This morning I called on the lady in my true character, and informed her that she was suspected of plotting against the government. She denied it, and frankly explained the whole matter. I have found, my lord, that it is, as I at first suspected, merely a love affair, with which the government has no right to meddle, and I promised the lady that it shall be hushed up. I think you will confirm my promise."

While the detective was speaking, the duke had been hurriedly turning over a mass of papers that lay on his table. As Laramie finished he took up one and glanced at it. Then turning to him, he said, hastily:

"Monsieur Laramie, will you let me see the paper entrusted to your care, and also the copy you made?"

"Certainly, my lord duke," replied the detective, handing them to him.

The duke glanced at them, and then burst into a laugh.

"This is very awkward, monsieur," he said, at length. "One makes some strange mistakes in a lifetime. You were given the wrong paper. The government is satisfied with your skill in this matter, and now entrusts you with the true conspiracy." He handed the detective another paper, and went on, "By the by, Monsieur Laramie, I think you told the peer last night, when you helped him to gain the street without notice, that what passed in at one of your ears, went out of the other, and all else into your pocket—in short, that you can keep a secret when it is to your advantage to do so."

"My lord duke is right."

"Well, then, Monsieur Laramie, you will receive from the peer whose secret you have discovered a cheque for ten thousand francs. You will then forget what you have seen. I have the honour to wish you good morning, monsieur."

Laramie returned the duke's bow and left the office. The next day he received a cheque for ten thousand francs, signed by the Duke de —, and later an equal amount in bank notes with a note of thanks, written in a woman's hand, but without a signature.

Two months later he laid before the duke the details of a conspiracy which had been for some time directly encouraged by the ambassador from — and his government.

J. D. M. C. J.

Five magnificent blocks of black marble have just been extracted from the quarries of Golzines, and are now on their road to Antwerp, to be shipped to England. Each measures 12 ft. long by 3 ft. 6 in. wide, and 2 ft. 9 in. thick, dimensions rarely obtained in perfect stones. They are intended for the Memorial to Prince Albert, and are remarkable for not having a single white spot.

THIRSTANE.

CHAPTER VII.

In the meantime, life in the quiet valley farm-house was going on in its accustomed round, the monotony of which had grown as necessary to Margaret Holmes as it had become distasteful to her niece.

But they never shared confidences, so that each was unaware of the thoughts or needs of the other, and Margaret was as ignorant of the wild fancies which teemed in Rachel's brain as the girl was of the part which her aunt kept so carefully shrouded in the gloom.

Miss Ophelia Hill watched them both without scruple, and made her comments accordingly, not having the slightest idea of keeping her reflections or conjectures to herself.

Margaret never paid the slightest attention to her remarks: the probability was she seldom ever heard them; but to Rachel, solitary and restless, it was amusing to listen to the girl's clear, shrewd ideas, expressed in the trenchant, positive manner which was one of the remarkable female's prominent characteristics.

The spring was deepening and growing more beautiful every day. Occupation and confinement in the house became more irksome to Rachel with each charm that betokened the approach of summer.

It was useless trying to be industrious, and she gave up the idea in despair, flung the piles of unfinished needlework out of sight, and sought relaxation in the few amusements which her solitude afforded.

The old mania for sketching came back on her, and from morning till night she busied herself with her labours.

Nobody had ever told the girl that she possessed talent; she drew because it had been a passion with her all her life; when or how she began, she hardly remembered.

Fortunately, in a town some twelve miles distant, there was a large school for young ladies, and artists' materials were sold there, so she was never at a loss to procure anything she wanted.

Indeed, Rachel had once attended the institution for a year, but the confinement wearied her: the girls with whom she was thrown in contact did not please her, and, after the vacation, she had refused to return.

The minister in the village near her home was an educated and kindly man, and from him Rachel had received instruction, as well as from Margaret herself, so that, as far as all branches of solid learning were concerned, she was much better informed than most of the misses who launched forth from our fashionable boarding schools with so much honour and more assurance.

Margaret Holmes was not at all liked by her neighbours, nor did she desire either their regard or their acquaintance.

There was not a dwelling in the village that she entered more than once in two years, and as most people stood a little in awe of her stately, dignified manners, few visitors ventured to the farm-house.

Often, for months, not a human being would pass the threshold, except persons occupied about the place, or old Mrs. Adams, the woman who had charge of Mr. Sherwin's mansion.

Margaret might have been a woman of great importance in the county if she had so chosen, but she preferred to go her own way.

The magnates of the district were kept as much aloof as the plainest villagers, and years before, people had given up trying to make her sociable, taking their revenge by calling her all sorts of unpleasant names.

Everybody called her a stern, cold-hearted old maid, whose greatest pride consisted in having a model farm and being considered a better housekeeper than her neighbours.

Cold and hard Margaret was, but she smiled in a wintry way when she heard such speeches concerning her tastes and ambition, and perhaps, whatever her neighbours might think, she had made as much out of her life as you or I would have done under similar circumstances.

She owned one of the finest farms in the county, and it had been brought to its present state of perfection under her own supervision.

Marshes were drained, orchards planted, worn-out fields renewed by some mysterious process, which neither you nor I could understand if I attempted to describe, and over every one of these reforms and improvements Margaret presided.

She superintended her household affairs, she made butter and cheese with her own hands, she worked in her garden, she was everywhere about her farm.

You will think I am describing an ordinary housewife, such as you know dozens of—no one who ever saw Margaret Holmes could have fallen into that error—one only wondered what could have forced her into pursuits so different from the tastes which

would have seemed natural to her clear intellect and cultivated mind.

She had taken to occupation and labour because she found in them what was her only safeguard; she needed constant occupation, and, more than all, she dreaded to have strangers about her, so even in the busiest season of the year she and Ophelia performed all the household labour, with such assistance as Rachel was able, or Margaret would permit her to give.

Long years before she had put aside her romances and books of poetry; had allowed no thought of the young life, with its Italian plains and breezes, to disturb her course, and rigidly forced her mind down to the actual.

I do not say but that she made her life more barren than it need have been, but it was necessary for her to break every link which connected her with the past, and she had done it in her own way.

Most old maids are supposed to have had a disappointment, but people seemed rather to think that Margaret had never married because she loved power and freedom too well.

But they had only their own surmises as a foundation for their beliefs; nobody knew anything of the secret life of the pale, cold woman.

Some terrible tempest had swept her youth from her, and left her stranded on the shore of existence, but she made no moan over the treasures lost in the shipwreck.

All her life Rachel had been kept at a chill distance from her, and the girl had not a friend of her own age. There was no one with whom she could find companionship, and it having been decided that she was as proud and unapproachable as her aunt, they were left to their solitude.

Rachel longed for society, not that of young girls, but the excitement of the world, bustle, action, and lacking these, she followed out her own wayward dreams, and quieted her restlessness as best she might.

As I said, she thought but little of her sketches; her artistic talent was the most marked gift she possessed, and as is often the case, it was the one she most undervalued.

Still she worked, unconsciously finding more interest and peace in the pursuit than in any other of her numerous efforts to make her life pleasant. So that summer she went back to her labours with renewed energy, finding herself more lonely than usual.

She could row a boat with much skill and owned a little skiff; thus she was able to spend half her time on the water.

She would float down the windings of the stream for miles and miles, beyond the beautiful island that lay in the haze, or urge her boat far up the channel above the valley, where it narrowed between the hanging cliffs which had lost scarcely a vestige of their original wildness.

From the top of the mountain at the head of the valley there was a beautiful view of its whole length, and very often during the long summer days, Rachel would row over to its foot, and with her favourite volumes of poetry and her sketch-book under her arm, clamber up the rocky path which led to its summit, and loiter there till nightfall, reading, drawing, or oftener still, dreaming and weaving plans for the future.

She grew hopeful again, believed that her life must soon find a change, and so the days did not drag heavily at her heart, though, unless she soon reached the long-expected opening, her strength and courage would fail.

One morning, as she was leaving the house with her little easel and box, she met Ophelia, who had been over to the village to make purchases for Miss Holmes.

The moment the damsel beheld her, she lifted both hands as well as her burthen would permit, and gave utterance to an exclamation of astonishment.

"What do you think," she said, "of all things to happen?"

"What may it be?" Rachel asked, too much accustomed to Miss Hill's wonderful surprises to feel very much excited.

"Who do you think has come to-day at the old house up yonder?"

"Was Mr. Sherwin come?" she questioned, with the flutter at her heart which that name always caused. "When did he get here, Ophelia—has he really come?"

"I never said so," replied Ophelia, somewhat offended that her broken expressions had been misinterpreted; "I haven't mentioned his name."

"Then he has not come?" Rachel asked, with a keen pang of disappointment.

"Mr. Sherwin hasn't; 'tim't noways likely he will—I hate folks you can't never depend upon—jest 'cause he's got money he thinks he can do what he pleases."

"But who is at his house?" interrupted Rachel, for if not checked at once, Miss Hill was capable of entirely forgetting the subject upon which she started, in her indignation against Mr. Sherwin for venturing to consult his own pleasure in his movements. "Do tell me who has come?"

"A painter chap—of all things! I'd like to know what business he has here, drawin' off everything he comes across?"

She appeared labouring under the impression that the artist intended to carry off property bodily, instead of simple sketches, and she was as much enraged thereat as if she had owned every foot of land for miles about.

"What is his name—who is he?" questioned Rachel, elated at the tidings.

"Don't know nothing about it: they told me he come last night. Afore the day's over I'll make it my business to see Miss Adams, and find out the whys and wherefores—he'll got a piece of my mind if I come across him, I can tell you that."

Rachel laughed at her energy, and tried to explain his probable business, but Miss Hill could not view it in any such innocent light, and would not be appeased.

"He hasn't no right to do it—I know that, if I ain't a lawyer," she said, "and John Sherwin ort to be ashamed of hisself to harbor sich critters in his house."

"How foolish you are, Ophelia! Can't you understand that he only wants to make sketches of the valley?"

"He hasn't got no business to do it," persisted Ophelia.

"Why, you have never complained of me."

"'Cause you live here and you jest do it for fun; but what right has any stranger got to come and draw us all off, and go and make money out of it, when we don't get a pennyworth of good?"

"You did not hear anything about Mr. Sherwin?"

"No; and I don't want to; I haven't any opinion at all of that man."

"You don't know anything of him."

"I don't want to."

Ophelia had been so curious to see Mr. Sherwin and to have his house inhabited once more, that when he disappointed her hopes, she was as much enraged as if he had especially injured her by his proceedings.

She launched forth against him and his whole family with renewed vehemence, but fortunately her eloquence was checked by a summons from the house.

Margaret chanced to pass a window and saw the two girls idling in the garden. She went to the door and ordered Ophelia to her work in a tone which even that high-spirited female did not venture to disobey.

She hurried towards the house, concluding her anathemas in a succession of muttered ejaculations as she passed up the steps.

Rachel had her solitary laugh out, then went down towards the river bank, where her little boat was moored.

An artist in the valley—a real painter—the very idea was pleasant to her, even if she never made his acquaintance.

She thought about it all the time that she was rowing across the river, and it gave her fancies a turn proper to the brightness of the morning.

She was bound for the nearest island, and when it was reached, she pulled her boat up on the sand and took her way to the nook where she meant to spend the forenoon.

She seated herself to make a sketch of a group of old elms that had twisted themselves into a thousand fantastic shapes, and covered with their summer foliage drooped and waved in the breeze till their picturesque beauty filled her with loving admiration.

The island was a charming spot, girdled with trees, a sandy beach stretching out into the river in the summer, dazzlingly white, while within the belt of sycamores and elms, the enclosure was a succession of breezy knolls and secluded dells.

It was just at the junction of the two rivers, and the nearest bank was covered with soft, green turf, and dotted with tall trees, beneath which the cattle sought shelter, their discordant bells making a pleasant sound in the distance.

It was a glorious day, and Rachel's attention became sorely distracted from her labours by its loveliness. Ever and anon a burst of sunlight would sweep through the tree branches and go dancing over the grass—the mild wind brought the scent of the flowers towards her—the ripple of the waters came up with sudden distinctness, and Rachel would drop her brush to enjoy that unexplainable sensation of delight which steals over one in a spot like that.

Then she would recall her thoughts and go conscientiously to work, until some new incident wiled her from her task.

A bird settled on a tree near by and sent forth such

gushes of melody that an uninitiated listener would have believed a score of birds were singing at once.

Rachel chirruped and held out her hand towards him, but he only put his head on one side, looked saucily down at her and continued his mimicry, much to the annoyance of the neighbouring songsters.

Again Rachel took up her brush and went back to her half-finished trees, but the sound of footsteps made her turn quickly, for it was not often that the seclusion of the island was thus invaded.

She saw an elderly gentleman in a cap and blouse, carrying sketching utensils of a more substantial sort than her own, standing a little way off, and regarding her with a somewhat curious glance—she knew at once that he must be the artist.

He looked so mild and good-natured that she could not feel any fear; besides, she could scarcely have found a reader more of introducing himself to Rachel's favourable acquaintance than the account Ophelia had given of his profession.

"Am I intruding on your domain, young lady?" he asked, smiling and touching his cap.

She shook her head, smiling in return.

"I did not expect to find a sister worker here," he continued, approaching more closely. "Will you permit me to look at your sketch?"

"Certainly, sir," Rachel replied, although she was usually very nervous about showing her attempts, but the stranger looked so kind and venerable that she could not refuse.

"Where have you had lessons?" he asked.

"I have never had any, sir; I took a few drawing lessons at school, but I did not learn much."

"Indeed!"

Rachel glanced anxiously at him; he looked at the sketch and then at her.

"This shows talent, young lady, great talent."

He stopped abruptly, for she was a thoughtful man, and it occurred to him that he might only do the girl harm by putting ambitious ideas into her head.

"You must persevere," he continued, "this is nothing to what you will do."

He asked her permission to sit down, and they fell into a familiar conversation upon art and things pertaining thereto. He told her of the years he had spent abroad, and Rachel regarded him with reverence.

When he gave her his name it was one with which she was acquainted—Charles Seaman; he was a portrait painter of celebrity.

"I was meant to paint landscapes," he said, after she had spoken of his pictures; "but circumstances compelled me to adopt the line that paid best. However, this summer I was determined to have a long ramble, and sketch as much as I pleased, and Mr. Sherwin good-naturedly placed his house at my disposal."

"And don't you think it a lovely place?" Rachel asked.

"Very lovely; I do not wonder you have a talent and love for art if you have lived all your life here."

"All my life; down in the brown house you see across the river."

"I have noticed the place; it is quiet and picturesque."

He looked as if he wondered how she happened to have been flung in that solitary place to live, but Rachel did not understand the meaning of his glance.

At that moment Mr. Adams came down the little descent and approached them.

"Ah, here you be, as cozy as two blackbirds," he said. "I was a coming to introduce you, but you've done it better for yourselves. Aphely told me you was here, Rachel, so I just brought him over to get acquainted with you, only I stopped to look after that driftwood up yonder."

"I took it for granted," said the artist, "that this was Miss Rachel Holmes, of whom you spoke to me last night, so I told her my name, and made her think me impertinent by commencing conversation."

"Mr. Seaman's going to our house for a few weeks," the farmer explained to Rachel; "he knows Mr. Sherwin, and told him the old woman and we would do the best we could. I expect he'll draw off pictures like smoke, and he was telling him last night you'd be just the one to show him the good place."

"He has lived abroad," Rachel said, with a sort of awe.

"I want to know; you don't say?" returned the farmer, not at all certain of her meaning, but prepared to consider his guest a wonderful man in every respect; "and don't you think Rachel does the pictures quite natural?" he asked of the artist.

"I am astonished at her success," he replied; "very much so."

Rachel coloured at his praise, and Mr. Adams was greatly delighted.

"I told you she was uncommon bright," said he, "and I expect you could help her."

"I shall be most happy, if she will accept any assistance I can give," Mr. Seaman answered.

"Do you mean you will really show me?" asked Rachel. "I am very, very glad! Oh! Mr. Adams, please to thank him; I cannot!"

"Wal; them eyes of yours is doing it better than I could," said the farmer; "taint no use to put in a word extra."

"Not the slightest," said the artist, smiling; "I am sufficiently repaid already."

"There ain't no likelihood of Mr. Sherwin's coming yet, Rachel," remarked the farmer. "The letter he sent by this gentleman says we're to have the house got ready; it was time, any how, and maybe he will get here afore the summer is over."

"Mr. Sherwin is always so much occupied," rejoined Mr. Seaman, "that he cannot decide upon his movements so long in advance."

"Any ways, he don't care much about coming back to the old place."

"I cannot see why," observed the artist; "certainly he would not find a more delightful spot."

"Like enough; but you see his mother died there, and his family's all gone, so I 'spose the old house would seem lonesome."

"There is a beautiful view, Miss Holmes, from the hill back of the grounds," said Mr. Seaman. "I was up there this morning."

"That is one of my favourite walks," replied Rachel.

"I am glad you like it."

"Like it? The distance is superb."

The old farmer listened to their conversation with a puzzled look.

"Wal, I don't know," he hazarded, "taint much good on a farm, that side hill is a dreadful barren spot. Howsumever I 'spect you know what you're at, so I'll just go back to my work and leave you two here. Rachy, you won't mind rowing Mr. Seaman home at dinner time."

She assented gladly, and the farmer left them to their pleasant talk, convinced that they were both remarkable people, but wondered at them notwithstanding.

From that day during the next two months Mr. Seaman gave Rachel the benefit of his skill and experience.

He was struck with the talent she displayed, and he was too kind a man not to do all in his power to foster it.

The history of his life would have been a story of self-sacrifice rarely surpassed, but he never told it to Rachel—seldom spoke of himself.

While a young man he had intended to devote his talent to the landscape branch of art, for he was an ardent lover of nature, and his tastes all pointed that way.

After his return from Europe he exhibited a number of landscapes, which were much admired, but art had not then taken a firm enough stand in this country to make them sell.

Still he would have persevered, but destiny seemed against him. His only brother died, leaving a large family of parentless children with no one but this uncle to whom they could look for support.

Whatever the struggle might have been Mr. Seaman did not hesitate. At first, he believed that it would be necessary for him to give up art and settle himself in some money-yielding business.

He was spared that pain at least. He painted several portraits which met with great favour, and in the end he succeeded, not only in maintaining his young relatives, but in making considerable reputation.

Now, after all those years, he was in a position to have gone back to his former love; but he was too old, so he went quietly on in the path he had chosen, neither repining nor unhappy, although his life had been very different from the dreams of his youth.

During the time he remained in the valley Rachel made great improvement, and when deprived of his assistance was able to go on more understandingly with her work.

The genial-hearted rustic holiday came to an end at length, and he was obliged to go back to his labours, and Rachel was alone again, feeling the solitude more irksome than ever, from its contrast with the pleasant companionship of the past few weeks.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE alterations at the old house had gone rapidly on. The rooms had been filled with workmen for the first time for years, the sunlight streamed through the great drawing-rooms, divesting them of their mysteriousness, and making things real and commonplace which had appeared vague and romantic before the deserted mansion had been Rachel's favourite dream haunt since childhood.

It seemed to her that some eventful history must have been connected with its abandonment, and while rambling through the garden or climbing the hills which overlooked the place, she was wont to occupy herself with all manner of strange fancies.

The house itself was nothing more than a commodious stone dwelling, flanked with wings, and decorated with porches, the whole now so shaded by elms, and clothed in vines, that it became a perfect bower during the summer months.

The grounds had fine old trees, pleasant nooks, and sloped down to the river, which took a picturesque curve in front of the place.

Beyond the mere externals there was a dearth of romance, so far as that house and its past were concerned.

There were quaintly furnished rooms; long halls, silent and dim, but Rachel could never learn that any remarkable event was connected with them, and had not her fertile imagination supplied material, the old mansion must have stood up as prosaic and everyday like as possible.

Since Rachel's remembrance, the house had not been inhabited except by the tenant who worked the farm and lived in the back rooms, for after the death of his father the present proprietor had seldom visited it. So the girl was free to dream there as much as appeared good to her.

Mrs. Adams allowed her to wander through the apartments whenever she liked, and a library on the ground floor had always been a favourite resort with her.

It was a pleasant old room, with handsome though faded furniture, two of the windows opening upon a terrace overgrown with wild sweetbriar. Rachel used to uncloset the heavy shutters, and establishing herself on the window-sill, spend hours poring over the books which the apartment was stored.

By these means she had acquired a range of information unusual with girls of her age and retired position.

The romances and poems possessed the greatest charm for her, and the day that she discovered a volume of Waverley was an era in her existence. After that she read much, turning from works of fiction to huge volumes of philosophy and travels, but Shakespeare and Scott she studied.

She had few companions, for her mind had never possessed anything in common with the young persons with whom she came in contact, and the creations of those lofty souls had become her familiar friends.

So she had gone on towards womanhood a dreaming, enthusiastic girl, wholly ignorant of life, full of grand visions whose impossibility never occurred when laying plans and weaving a future for herself which should lead far from the tranquil existence she had hitherto passed.

Rachel confided to no one her strange fancies, and the very secrecy in which they were cherished increased their power.

She had grown so visionary that the most improbable event arriving to change the whole course of her destiny, would have seemed perfectly natural.

When alone in that gloomy library, had a figure suddenly appeared before her, she would unshrinkingly have regarded it as the long-looked-for being who was to lead her forth to a new life, and have gone onward untrifled in the appointed path.

Few persons understand the strength with which such dreams fasten upon an imaginative mind, casting their influence through a whole life, and often-times blighting an existence which, properly cared for, might have been a great and useful one.

Rachel had no adviser; no one to warn her of the fallacy of her visions, the absolute sin of wasting her youth in idle dreams.

Margaret seldom talked to her; she was occupied with her household duties, going about grim and silent, with tireless feet and busy hands; or if at times some softening in her manner was perceptible to the girl, it passed quickly, leaving the spinster harder and sterner than before.

She had tried in vain to make Rachel useful, and of late had left her almost wholly to her own devices, contenting herself with occasional chill rebukes, to which Rachel was so accustomed that she scarcely heard, forgetting them half an hour after in the mysteries of a romance or play.

Weeks passed; the changes at the old house had been completed and the workmen were gone, leaving it as quiet and deserted as before.

Still Mr. Sherwin did not arrive, though the active housewife had established the most perfect order throughout her domain, and was impatiently awaiting the return of the owner.

For a time Rachel ceased visiting the place through fear of meeting the stranger, but when the spring brightened into summer and still he came not, she resumed her usual mode of life, haunting the grounds, and dreaming in the library through the long, golden days after her ordinary profitless fashion.

She was more restless and excitable than of old; she had waited so long for the fulfilment of her dreams, and still it came not!

She was weary of expectation—the days seemed to have doubled their length—the nights found her sleepless, ill at ease.

Her long vigils grew more frequent, till often she watched the stars out in their silent course, weeping and murmuring from a vague grief for which she could find no source and no name.

One day she had been confined in the house with some needlework, which had lain so long unfinished in her basket that she seated herself in desperation to complete it, and, like all persons who labour from impulse, had tired herself out with her exertions.

As the sunset came on, she threw by her needle, and taking her bonnet, went down stairs for a walk. Aunt Margaret was knitting in the front room, and Rachel passed unheeded into the kitchen, where Miss Hill ruled in solitary state.

"You're a going out!" she said, as Rachel entered, not asking the question, but flinging the fact down as if it had been a missile which it was her duty to throw.

"Where are you goin'?"

"To walk," Rachel said, sitting down in a chair.

"Oh, Ophelia, I am so tired!"

"Of course you are—I never see anybody like you! Taint often you take it into your head to work, but when you do no steamboat ever pushed ahead in the way you do."

"So tired!" repeated Rachel, slowly, but it was not bodily fatigue which oppressed her.

More unwearied than her fingers had flown her thoughts the whole day long, finding no pleasant spot whereon to rest; drifting down, down, like tired birds floating passively over dark waters, and unable to rescue themselves from the rushing torrent beyond.

"What a queer girl you are!" pursued Ophelia, establishing herself directly before her with the air of a judge about to examine a criminal; "jest the queerest girl I ever see—now don't say you ain't, because it's true."

"How am I different from other people?" Rachel asked, smiling a little.

"Why you never go anywhere, you don't know anybody, you do nothing but read and study, and draw all day long."

"Do you ever get lonesome, Ophelia?"

"Sometimes, but I work it off or run out somewhere and get over it. Ain't it strange that John Sherwin don't come? But they always was a queer set, them Sherwins."

"Did you ever see Mr. Sherwin?"

"Yes; when I was a little gal; he was quite a young man then. Gracious! how he must be altered."

"Is he married?"

"Never. He's been abroad most all his life; his brother died there."

"Did he have a brother?"

"Wal, a half brother; it's all the same, and a bad young feller he was too. Old Mrs. Adams told me that folks used to say—"

"What did they say?" questioned Rachel, impatiently.

"Your Aunt Margaret would be cross if she thought I told you."

"Do tell it and be done, Ophelia!"

"It isn't anything; only they said your mother was fond of John, and he of her."

"Was it true?" asked Rachel, eagerly, "was it?"

"How can I tell—I wasn't born! Any how, he went off, and all of a sudden your mother started up and married her cousin William. Your Aunt Margaret and she used to think themselves a little better than anybody, 'cause they were sent away to school."

Rachel was thinking of her mother—of that past of which she knew so little!

She strove to picture Aunt Margaret a young girl; she longed to question her concerning those youthful days—to learn something of her parents, but dared not intrude upon the spinster's grim privacy.

"If I could only have seen my mother!" she sighed.

"They say she was han'some; so was your Aunt Margaret, only with a proud way that folks didn't like. She's got it now when she pleases—pullin' herself up like this."

The way in which Miss Hill drew up her lank form and put out her right foot set Rachel into a fit of laughter; for the contrast between her appearance and Aunt Margaret's stately figure rendered her imitation particularly amusing.

"It's lucky for you that your father left you money of your own, or wouldn't she have made you work?" pursued Ophelia, by some miracle not taking offence at Rachel's merriment.

"Never mind; you mustn't speak of my aunt in that manner."

Miss Hill's conversation was pattering and ceaseless as a noisy brook. She only required to have some



[RACHEL MAKES AN ACQUAINTANCE.]

one in hearing; whether her companion listened or not appeared a matter of supreme indifference; her narratives and discussions went on all the same.

When Rachel next caught a fragment of her discourse, she was deep in the details of a figured muslin gown that she had lately seen, and which excited her warmest admiration. But her eloquence was checked by Margaret's voice, calling—

"Ophelia! Ophelia Hill!"

"There she goes," muttered the amiable damsel; "now I shan't do another stroke of work to-night, and I'll tell her so."

Rachel passed on, without waiting to hear the argument that was certain to ensue, and pursued her way towards the old house.

It was already growing dusk in the grounds, and Rachel hurried to the side of the dwelling where Mrs. Adams's rooms were situated.

Neither the farmer nor his wife were in, and she sat down to await their return. In her restless mood quiet seemed doubly irksome, and confident that the house was empty, she crossed the hall and entered the library.

The windows were open, and the twilight filled the room with shadows. She began walking to and fro, till the silence and the gloom made her fairly nervous, and she hastened down the terraced steps into the grounds.

She passed out of them, followed the wood along the river until it left the brink of the stream and wound up among the hills. Rachel ascended the path, which was rocky and steep, and stood gazing down upon the valley.

Suddenly, in the woods behind, she heard the tread of a horse rapidly approaching. Looking through the gloom, she saw that the horse had no rider, and that the bridle had fallen about his feet.

A fear of some accident seized her, and physically courageous, without a moment's thought that there might be danger for herself, she sprang forward and grasped the rein. The horse stopped at once and stood quietly by her, while footsteps hurried down the road.

A tall, middle-aged man came towards the spot where Rachel was standing, and taking the bridle from her hand, said courteously:

"I owe you many thanks. My horse played me a sad prank; I got off to allow him to drink, and he ran away from me."

Rachel's face was turned from him, and she only bowed in response.

"I believe this road comes out by the river, does it not?" he continued.

"Just at the foot of the hill," Rachel replied.

"I thought my memory could not deceive me, though I have not been here for many years."

Rachel gave a start—the stranger was Mr. Sherwin!

"Had my horse stopped here?" he asked.

"No, sir; I caught him by the bridle as he passed."

He glanced quickly towards her, but still her face was turned from him.

"You are brave," he said. "Few girls are so fearless."

There was something very pleasant in the sound of his voice, and Rachel summoned courage enough to look at him.

He was gazing down the valley, over which the moon had risen, giving the scene a tranquil beauty, soothing and sweet.

Rachel saw the face—a quiet, melancholy one. It had been handsome formerly, but though no signs of age were perceptible, it had an almost painful look, from the sad expression of the eyes and mouth.

"Who lives now in that old farmhouse?" he asked, pointing towards her home.

"Miss Holmes," she replied.

He turned at the name; the moonlight fell full upon her face; when he saw it he started, and catching her hand, said, in a quick, broken voice:

"Your name is—you are—"

"Rachel Holmes," replied the girl.

The stranger dropped her hand and leaned heavily against the house; Rachel heard his breath come in gushes, like one, exhausted with fatigue or emotion.

"Rachel Holmes," he repeated; "you are Rachel Holmes?"

The girl was trembling all over with feelings for which she could not account; he saw it, and composing himself, said more quietly:

"I have startled you, young lady! Excuse me—but I—I knew your mother."

"You knew my mother? If I could only have seen her; but they died, she and my father, before I can remember."

"And you live with—"

"My Aunt Margaret."

"Surely," he said, slowly, "I had forgotten, your Aunt Margaret."

He stood looking at her until she grew troubled beneath his gaze, and turned to go away.

"Are you going?" he said.

"Yes, sir; it is late—good night."

He took her hand again very gently:

"And you are happy, child? Answer me that—"

don't be afraid of me! Though we never meet again, remember I was once your mother's friend."

"I suppose I am happy, sir; I have no reason to be otherwise."

"And Margaret—your aunt—she is fond of you?"

"Not very, I think, sir; but it is difficult to tell what Aunt Margaret feels; she seldom talks."

"Is she changed—has she grown old?"

"I always remember her as she is now—very pale, very cold—"

"And hard?" he interrupted; "hard, stern and unforgiving. Without mercy for herself or others—pitiless and stern as iron—yes, that is Margaret!"

"Was my mother like that?"

"Your mother—child, child! No, your mother was very unlike that—very unlike that."

"And she is dead!"

He grasped her hand tightly, and a strange pallor came over his face.

"Dead," he repeated, "dead!"

Suddenly he released her hand and sprang upon his horse.

"I had no right to come here," he muttered; "I feel like a ghost come back to trouble the present—I will go away."

He leaned over and pressed his lips to her upturned forehead, while his eyes grew misty.

"Good bye, Rachel," he said; "I shall not go on—I will trouble no one by my presence. The past is gone; why should I rake up its ashes? Be good and kind, Rachel, as you seem to be now."

"Going?" she said sorrowfully, "going?"

"For ever! Let them be at peace—this time it is for ever. Good bye, Rachel." He kissed her forehead again and again with a caress that was like a silent prayer. "You will not say that you have seen me—tell no one of it."

He turned his horse and rode rapidly up the ascent, leaving Rachel overpowered with astonishment, and so shaken and nervous that, as the last sound died in the distance, she threw herself upon the grass and gave way to a passion of tears.

"And that was Mr. Sherwin! What could he mean? He spoke as if he had known me all my life—I who never set eyes on him before. It might have been so pleasant for him to live here, and now he is gone! Like all my dreams, it came with a promise and vanished for ever. How still it is—oh, if I could but hear the tread of his horse again."

She arose and listened; shook her head mournfully; then went slowly away, oppressed for once with a real trouble.

(To be continued.)



[MRS. HASSELTON'S DANGER.]

STANLEY LOCKWOOD.

By W. E. CHADWICK.

CHAPTER XI.

It is the very change of tide
When best the female heart is tried—
Pride, prejudice, and modesty,
Are in the current swept to sea;
And the bold swain who plies his oar
May lightly row his barque to shore.

Walter Scott.

WHEN supper was announced they were joined by the dignified uncle, Mr. Courtney, Flora's guardian. He had been Deloraine's guardian also during his minority, and most uprightly had he fulfilled the trust reposed in him.

Deloraine and his sister were left orphans at a very early age, and as Mr. Courtney was entrusted with the sole management of their property, he had resided, ever since the death of their father, at Rudland Hall, where he had always been looked upon as its master, and, although Deloraine was now over age, he had requested his uncle to retain his position, until he should himself return from his travels, as Flora could not remain there without a protector.

He was a very cold, silent gentleman, but studiously polite in his manners. He was elaborately aristocratic in dress, in equipage, and his whole demeanour. He was oppressively polite to Stanley, whose position at college was so distinguished, and who, as the ward of Mr. Hasseltou, he considered had a claim to some consideration.

Mrs. Lambert, who presided at the table, had a mild and prepossessing countenance, and performed the honours of hospitality with less show, but more grace, than the stately Mr. Courtney.

Though he conversed but little, he sometimes made set speeches, and he deemed this a proper occasion for one. Laying down his knife and fork, and folding his hands, he said:

"I am very happy, Mr. Lockwood, to welcome you to Rudland Park. I observed with great pleasure the manner in which you distinguished yourself at Oxford, and the high honours which you obtained. Mr. Hasseltou is a gentleman, too, whom I respect very highly as a gentleman; and, as a man of wealth and family, I am exceedingly particular with whom I associate or admit as companions to my nephew and niece. It is difficult to break off low associations—much better never to form them. I consider you in every respect an unexceptionable young gentleman,

and I again repeat I am happy to welcome you to Rudland Park."

With a dignified and self-respecting bow, he then resumed his knife and fork. It was not without a great effort that Stanley preserved proper gravity of demeanour during this elaborate address, for a bright eye-beam from Flora, full of mirth and mischief, played upon him with contagious power.

Deloraine, too, wore a look of such assured and patient attention that Stanley found his only safety was in looking at Mr. Courtney, and appearing duly honoured by the august greeting.

He replied with the simplest possible expression of gratitude, hoping he might be spared a similar infliction.

When the supper was concluded, and they returned to the drawing-room, he felt a rebound of all his faculties, so heavy had been the weight of Mr. Courtney's overpowering aristocracy.

He was convinced that had old Morgan made the same revelation before him that he had before the stranger of the boat, he would not have given him that studied welcome.

Deloraine placed Flora at the piano, and called forth her most exhilarating strains.

At first she played only waltzes and other music of a light description, and Stanley feared the vocal charm was wanting to give a soul to her brilliant execution. But he was mistaken. Flora had a sweet and powerful voice, and one capable of expressing the deepest and saddest feelings.

Indeed its greatest fascination consisted in a certain tremulous, tearful, sound, expressive of unfathomable sensibility.

It reminded you of Juliet weeping over the tomb of her Romeo, Cordelia mourning over her white-locked maniac sire, Viola hiding in her heart the love that fed upon her damask cheek.

It was evident that she felt what she sang, for her countenance changed with every changing note. Stanley could not have believed it possible that it could express such depths of melancholy; but when she sat with her long lashes drooping towards her cheek, its carnation hue melting into the softest olive, and her arch and smiling lip quivering with tenderness, he repeated to himself again and again:

"Ah! what a heart is there! what capabilities of love and passion lie hidden under that usually gay, brilliant exterior! what equal capacities for sorrow and despair! Charming, impassioned L'clair, were it mine to awaken the first, how carefully, how jealously would I guard thee from the last!"

"Come, lady fair, give us a blither measure!" cried

Deloraine. "Lockwood looks as if he were turning into a weeping willow, and I have saturated my white handkerchief already."

It was astonishing with what rapidity she dashed into one of the most inspiring, exciting airs of the day.

The soft mist vanished from her eyes, the carnation came back to her cheek, the smile to her lip. Then Stanley said to himself, with a sigh:

"Where there is such wondrous versatility of feeling, can there be really depth and strength? Is it not superficial, after all? She calls me an enigma. Never was there one like her."

Stanley was to remain several days with his friend, and bright and pleasant days they were.

Mr. Courtney at each meal inflicted upon him one of his formal addresses; but as he was now prepared for them he knew better how to reply.

He found that Flora had a highly cultivated mind for so young a girl, and she was a passionate lover of books, with a marvellous memory that retained all she read.

She took him to her library, a small and tastefully decorated room, opening by a low window into the garden.

Full rich scarlet curtains shaded this window, looped up one on each side to let in the light, and a sweet-scented vine that came clambering up of its own accord twined about the frame.

"I know," she said, sweeping aside the folds of the curtains so as to give him a broader view of the gilded tomes—"I know it is very bad taste to have this red drapery to adorn a library. It should be green—dark, classic green—or imperial purple; but neither green nor purple will do to bring in contrast with my Egyptian face. I must contrast it with the brilliant scarlet or gorgeous orange. These volumes," continued she, pointing to some of more massive form and antique bindings, "were my father's, and belong by right to Charles, though I find much to admire and venerate in the old authors; and sometimes, when I change their position and wipe the dust from the binding, I stand like Dominic Sampson mounted on that flight of steps, forgetful of time or place. These shelves," added she, turning to a lighter, more ornamental range, "are all my own—exclusively my own. It is here I feel the wizard spell of genius, and wander in the moonlight climes of poetry and romance."

"And it is here," said Stanley, laying his hand on a superb portfolio that was laid upon the table—"here you enclose the burning thoughts whose influences other minds must own and feel. Here you imprison the electric fire whose sparks might kindle

the coldest substance, and even pass through insulating mediums."

"Does Stanley Lockwood condescend to flatter?" asked she, with a dash of scorn in her manner. "Oh, if you know how I detest flattery. I have had so much of it, merely because I am an heiress and had the misfortune to lose my parents when I was very young. I was two years at a boarding-school, and found my true level there. When I attended the Commemoration at Oxford I had just returned, and found it very difficult to persuade Charles not to acknowledge me as his sister on that occasion."

"If he had," said Stanley, colouring, "I should have been saved some keen afterpangs."

"How is that?" cried she, quickly, without looking up.

"I should not then have mistaken the affection of a brother for the permitted endearments of a lover," he replied, emboldened by her vivid blushes.

"And why should that pain you, selfish being that you are?" said she, with her own peculiar mocking smile. "Is the heart so narrow that it can contain but one object of interest? Is it a dungeon where the poor captive sits in solitary confinement, pining for the fresh air that struggles through the iron grate? Cannot I love Charles and like you and fifty others, too, if I choose? I feel that I have a magnificently large heart."

"Flora L'clair," cried he, earnestly, "though your heart were as large as the whole universe it should not have room for another love than mine, if I once gained admittance there. I speak not of sisterly affection, friendship, or esteem. I speak of love—such love as you were born to inspire, and I was born to feel."

"I wish you would not talk of love," said she, fluttering the leaves of a book she held in her hand. "I want you to be my friend, my true and sincere friend. I want you to tell me of my faults, as you did when we first met at the university; to speak to me in that tone of beautiful solemn earnestness, to make me feel that you are above me, that I have something to reach after and attain. But don't go to talking raptures, and so forth. Don't try to make me feel my power. I shall grow wilful, haughty, and overbearing, and then—"

"And then," said Stanley, with calm self-possession, "you would have no power over me at all. The moment you tried to make me feel the weight of chains, I could break them as easily as the unshorn giant did the green withes that bound him."

"I have always dreaded the idea of love," she said, more seriously, "because I know if I once yielded to its power I should become its slave. There is something terrible to me in the thought of giving one's happiness so completely in another's keeping; to hang trembling, palpitating, on the frail dependency of another's truth and constancy. No," she added, commanding the agitation of her voice, and waving back her ringlets with sportive grace. "Let me follow my own volitions for at least three or four years to come; let me enjoy my emancipation from daily rules and scholastic discipline; let my mind soar unfettered to the heights where I wish to stand, and then, perhaps, when I am more worthy of the heart's homage, I may be tempted to wear those bonds, which, though covered with roses, and seeming light as air, must be stronger than steel, and heavier than iron."

"Listen to me one moment, Flora," he said, taking her hand, and seating her within the shadow of the scarlet curtains, while he sat down by her side. "We are both very young, I know, but we may talk of the future, may we not?"

"The future!" she repeated, "that seems a mighty shadow rolling far, far off."

"Of the past, then—those lightning letters."

"Ah! you promised never to allude to them."

"I did not promise, though you required the bond. Those letters sealed my destiny. They showed our minds were one. The divided unity has been brought together by those electric sparks, and thinks, and feels, and glows in unison. It was not chance that brought us together at the fountain's side. It was not an idle whim that prompted you to write those bridling words. It was the impulse of the soul seeking its kindred soul, the heart reaching after the mutual heart."

At this moment, when all the softness and sensibility of womanhood mellowed the brightness of her countenance, and her lip trembled with unspoken words, Deloraine opened the door, and, laughing, was about to close it again when Flora sprang up and detained him.

"Your friend is too metaphysical for me," she said. "I cannot fathom him. He is a Transcendentalist."

"Well, I want him to ride on horseback with me over the hills. That will clear away the German mist from his brain. Supposing you come with us, you will be a far better guide than I am, for there is not a nook or dingle you have not explored."

Away flew Flora, apparently as much excited at the thought of riding as if there were no such thing as sentiment in the world.

She soon appeared equipped in a dark riding-dress and cap with black drooping feathers. It looked like the same she had worn when he first saw her demurely waiting for her recumbent pony, but as she had grown since that period it must have been another made in a similar fashion.

Instead of the recumbent brown pony she mounted a beautiful white horse, which displayed the dark outlines of her figure to great advantage.

Wild and fearless she dashed ahead, regardless of obstructions, and mocking the speed of her companions.

"This is my life," she said to Stanley, as they paused to admire the rich rolling expanse of the corn-fields before them.

"I am a far better steward than the one my uncle hires. The field labourers will work better for me than for any one else, and sometimes I jump from my horse and help the haymakers. You cannot think how I enjoy it."

"You must not do that any more, Flora," said Deloraine. "It would do well enough in the school-girl, but not in the young lady who is mistress here, for the present at least."

"Oh! I do detest the idea of being a woman," exclaimed Flora. "I wish I could always be a girl. Mrs. Lambert is always telling me, 'Flora, you forget how old you are growing, you must be staidier now.' Dear, formal uncle cries, in his solemn accents, 'Niece, it is time that you remember the dignity and responsibility of your station,' and even provoking Charles begins to tailor me and set me up on the stilts of womanhood and heiress-ship. Stanley, I hope you at least will not preach me out of the wild freedom of childhood yet."

There was something so extremely juvenile in her appearance with her curls wreathing and sporting with the feathers that drooped over her cheeks, such freshness and buoyancy, and life about her, that Stanley did think it would be a pity to restrain that wild grace, and brush off that dewy bloom from her bright morning apron.

He was about to say as much when she darted off in a new direction, leaving no guide but a gay laugh ringing through the woods, by which to follow her course.

When they returned they found a visitor had arrived during their absence—a young gentleman named Russell, whose father had formerly been on intimate terms with Mr. Courtney, and who was well known to Deloraine. Stanley could not help feeling a natural recoil and disgust when he recognized the insouciant stranger of the ferry-boat in the new guest at Rudland Hall, and the bow with which he acknowledged the courteous introduction of Deloraine breathed the very soul of haughtiness.

He could not help it. He could not forget the scornful stare, the supercilious smile, the air of conscious superiority, which had set all his passions boiling on that well-remembered day.

They all left the room to dress before dinner, and Stanley had time to reflect on the possible consequences of the meeting.

He knew the scornful pride of Mr. Courtney would prompt him to look down on the son of a ferryman and steward, whatever other claims he might have to consideration and regard.

Would Deloraine be governed by such petty pride? Would Flora? He now regretted the silence Mr. Hasselton had imposed on the subject.

Had Deloraine known all the realities of his condition, and then invited him to his home, he could not fear the arrogance that now threatened to annoy him.

He lingered in his room, fearing he might lose his self-control in the presence of Flora, if he again met that insolent, measuring glance of scorn.

Slowly he walked through the carpeted hall, and reached the door of the drawing-room. Russell and Mr. Courtney were sitting with their backs to the door, Deloraine and Flora in an oblique direction.

Neither observed the approach of Stanley, so intent were they on the words of the speaker, who was Russell, the new guest.

"I repeat," said he, emphatically, "that his father was a low ferryman, and is now the steward of Mr. Hasselton's estate. He was bred to the ferryman's trade. I saw him push the boat myself. I heard the old soldier talk about his father. I inquired and found it was all true. I am willing to take my oath upon its truth."

"'Tis false," exclaimed Flora, in a passionate tone. "He brought up in a ferryman's hut! His father a steward! Never!"

"This cannot be true," cried Deloraine, indignantly. "I was with him three years at college, and never heard a word of it before."

Before the young man could reply Stanley advanced

into the room, and walking in front of Russell, said, in rather a husky tone of voice: "Is it of me you are speaking, sir?"

"It is," answered the young man, drawing back a few paces, and placing a chair between himself and Stanley.

"Deny it, Stanley," cried Flora, "it is nothing but slander—we all know it is."

The earnestness with which she spoke, her excited countenance, the indignant looks which Deloraine darted towards Russell, the cold, austere mien of Mr. Courtney, staggered the faith of Stanley in his own triumphant power to resist the prejudices of education on the part of his friends, and the narrow pride of the man of wealth and family.

But he was glad the trial came when it did. He wanted to see the innate nobility of Flora and Deloraine put to a shining test.

"I cannot deny it," said he, folding his arms across his breast. "I cannot deny what is truth, and nothing but the truth."

Mr. Courtney rose with an air of offended dignity.

"This is very surprising," said he, "a very surprising case. I did not imagine my friend Hasselton would have imposed on us in this manner. I, who have always been so particular to select irreproachable companions for my nephew and niece, to be so grossly deceived!"

He put his hand behind him, and walked across the room with an exceedingly imposing demeanour.

"I cannot allow a reflection to be cast on my noble, my excellent benefactor," cried Stanley, with warmth.

"He wished me to conceal those circumstances in my father's life connected with the story of his misfortunes and sorrows, and I obeyed him. Perhaps, knowing the world better than myself, he was aware there were some contracted minds who, measuring me by their own narrow standard, would expose me to the insults of this hour. But let me tell you, sir, that my father is a man of birth equal to your own, and of an education inferior to none of the magnates of the land. Of the misfortunes that impoverished and induced him to seek the solitude of the river's shore, I cannot, ought not to speak. If my young hand was taught to stem the current of the rushing river, it has only been nerved with stronger power to resist—"

here he cast a withering glance at Russell, who was still intrenched behind the mahogany chair—"to resist the arrogance that would degrade and the haughtiness that would oppress. Mr. Hasselton, sir, visited us in the house of my father's darkened fortunes, and seeing him to be a gentleman in education and manners equal to himself, and taking an interest in my then boyish self, drew us from the obscurity uncongenial to our character and talents. It is true, my father has assisted in the management of his estate. It is true he has borne the heat and burden of a daily care, in gratitude and fidelity to his generous friend. But he is no hireling, eating the bread earned by mercenary wages. He is the honoured friend, the revered companion, the respected counsellor, the adopted brother of the first and best of men. If I have concealed these circumstances, it is not that I am ashamed to avow them, but because I have been bound by a promise not to do so! I rejoice that they are revealed! They reflect lustre on my father's present reputation, for greater is he who has resisted temptation than the conqueror of nations. They give beauty and dignity to the name of Hasselton, and they glid with honour, yes, threefold honour, my own springing laurels."

Stanley spoke with a fervour and enthusiasm and strength that brought the burning blood to his cheek, and a burning fire to his eyes, and a triumphant tone to his voice, that voice which was yet to ring like a silver clarion in the cause of justice and truth.

Deloraine sprang forward, and seizing him by both hands, exclaimed:

"Lockwood, you are a glorious fellow—I always said you were. I like you better than I did before, a thousand times better; and by the shade of Cicero, (this was his standing oath,) I would fight my own brother, if I had one, who should dare to speak disrespectfully of your father in my presence. Flora tell him that you echo your brother's feelings. Let him not believe, for one moment, that you could be swayed by mean and sordid influences."

"I blush for the momentary pride I betrayed at first," said Flora, with blushing ingenuousness. "The circumstances, as he has explained them, have only ennobled him in my estimation, and they who sought to lower him have only elevated him in my eyes."

"Miss Deloraine, you are too demonstrative," said Mr. Courtney, with a stately wave of his delicate hand. "I see no occasion for any expression of feeling on your part. Remember, you have a dignity to maintain, a station to adorn."

"Dignity—station!" repeated Flora, in a low, scornful tone, sheathing with their long lashes the lightnings of her eyes. "They cannot squeeze my soul

into a thumb-screw: the familiars of the Inquisition could not do it."

The dinner-bell rang, and Courtney waving his hand to Mr. Russell, who very gladly led the way from the room, where he could but feel that he had disgraced himself in his impotent attempt to deprecate another, turned to Stanley with another wave of the hand, but the young man stood still.

"I sit not at your board, nor sleep under your roof again, sir," said he, in a calm, respectful tone, "till I am requested to do it, as the equal of yourself, your nephew, and the gentlemen now your guest."

"Lockwood, you are my guest," interrupted Deloraine, hastily.

"I was never deficient in the duties of hospitality," said Mr. Courtney, "and I invite you as the guest of my nephew to take your accustomed seat; by so doing I hope I neutralise the effect of any remarks that may have offended your pride."

With a bow he crossed the threshold, and Stanley biting his lip and smothering his brow took the arm of Deloraine and went to the dinner-table.

He there conversed with his usual ease with Mrs. Lambert, Deloraine, and Flora, but he ate very little, and left the table soon after the ladies. In the course of the evening he said to Deloraine:

"We must leave to-morrow; at least, I must. Your uncle does not look upon me as he did before, and the presence of this young man is intolerable to me."

"Not more so to you than to me," replied Deloraine.

"He is an upstart, proud, ignorant, thick-headed, cock-comb, who has fixed his presumptuous eyes upon Flora, caring for nothing but her wealth. He thought the proud heiress would look upon you with disdain after the knowledge he imparted. He aspires to such a girl as my sister? When a frog catches the star that shines upon the pond, then Flora will look down on him. Never mind my uncle, Lockwood; he can't unbend, he is too proud. He never lost his perpendicularity in his life. Besides, I am the real master here; he is only the guardian, and invested with delegated rights."

"Nevertheless, we had better start in the morning: it is best that we should. A few days more will make but little difference to you, and it may be of great consequence to me."

"Well, I am ready. I dare say you are right. But I do wish that block-headed Russell had stayed away."

They made their arrangements immediately. They were to start very early in the morning, before the family rose, and bade their adieus before retiring for the night.

Flora, who would not sit down with Russell, had taken a light and withdrawn to the library, while Deloraine and Stanley were making their hasty preparations. There the young man followed her.

"Flora," said Deloraine, "we have come to bid you good-by; we start in the morning, at day-break."

"I thought so," said she, in an agitated voice. "You cannot wish to remain while that intruding guest is here."

She added this with an expression of the most sovereign contempt.

"We leave him to your tender mercies," said Deloraine, "assured that you will not forget what is due to the dignity of your station, as our sapient uncle so often remarks."

Stanley, when he was last in that library, had spoken freely and boldly to Flora of the strong sympathy that drew them to each other. Now he was resolved to make himself a name and fame before he addressed the young heiress in the language of love. The time which would elapse before they again met would prove their minds and hearts.

He felt confidence in himself, confidence in her; but his eyes alone betrayed the emotions he felt.

"You will write often, Charles," said she, when the parting moment came. "You will both write, will you not?"

"I waited only for your permission," replied Stanley. "But may I not address you as L'éclair, when I write? No other name will seem appropriate as a correspondent."

"Write as the spirit prompts," said Flora, with a brilliant blush. "I believe in impulses after all."

Stanley felt his stoical resolutions melting away. It was evident that Flora wished to convince him that malice had not shaken the hold he had on her esteem. Never had she spoken so feelingly, so confidently.

"I don't like long good-byes," cried Deloraine, "so God bless you, sweet sister, and watch over you till I see you again."

Flora wept, as he clasped her in a warm, fraternal embrace, and clung to him in unwillingness to let him go.

He was her only brother, and it was always painful to her to part from him for any length of time, and perhaps other regrets which she dared not own gave intensity to her emotions.

It was strange to see tears flowing from her sun-

bright eyes, and Deloraine wiped the moisture from his own several times.

"Why, my brave sister," he cried, releasing himself from her arms, "this will never do. Reserve one kiss and one tear for Stanley, your other, better brother."

Thus authorized, Stanley kissed the crimson cheek that rested a moment on his shoulder. It was the first time his lips had given, or her cheek received the kiss of love, and it was love, the first, the only love that had ever warmed their young hearts.

CHAPTER XII.

Look, look, red as blood,
All on high!
It is not the daylight that fills with its flood
The sky!
What a clamour awaking,
Roars up through the street,
What a bell-vapour breaking
Rolls on through the street,
And higher and higher
Aloft moves the column of fire!

Schiller.

It is said that a course of uninterrupted prosperity hardens the heart of man, and makes him forgetful of the Giver of every good and perfect gift; that he buildeth fine palaces and lordly barns, and saith with haughty self-elation, "Soul, make merry with thy goods, and enjoy without fear the long banquet of life."

It is not always so. Mr. Hasselton's heart was not the clay that bakes and indurates in the sunshine, in which no seed will germinate, no vegetation take root. It was a sunny slope that produced the richest fruit and verdure, because the beams shed warmth on its surface, and it radiated them back to the atmosphere. The more prosperous he was the more grateful was he to God, the more benevolent to his fellow-men.

Stanley had been absent more than a year. An unusually abundant harvest had crowned the hope of the farm tenants, and the corn ripened by a fervid sun was got in without being exposed to any of those autumnal rains which so often damage the crops.

Indeed, it had been singularly dry, and now that the earth had given in its increase, nothing would have been considered a greater blessing than a shower to sprinkle the dusty shrubbery and the thirsty earth. The moon shone with a crimson hue through the dry and powdery atmosphere, and Dorothy said it was a certain sign that something was going to happen when it had that colour.

She did hope it was not to Master Stanley. The family sat in the verandah, and Mary, as she watched the blood-red orb slowly rolling up above the skirts of the woods, wondered if a pair of deep black eyes distant from her own were gazing on its disk and their master was thinking of her.

Mrs. Hasselton leaned back in the chair in serene silence, while her husband and Mr. Lockwood sat and talked on themes of mutual interest.

The strains of Muza's violin were heard in the meadow and some of the village children were dancing to the music.

"I know not why it is," said Mr. Hasselton, "but I sometimes feel sad from the very excess of my contentment. I feel the impossibility of such a state of things always lasting. I have been so blessed, so favoured by Providence, that dark days must be in store for me, for I cannot expect to be exempt from the common lot. About the time I first visited your Welsh cottage Mrs. Hasselton was in delicate health, and I felt anxious on her account. That cloud passed away and left the horizon clear. Ever since then I have prospered. I believe your coming among us, Lockwood, you and your children, brought a blessing on the household. You have been an able coadjutor, a wise and faithful friend. I wonder now how I ever got along without you."

"I am sure I found the blessing here," replied Lockwood with grateful emotion. "This has been the gate of heaven to me. The events of that night, which brought you under my roof, were arranged by infinite wisdom and infinite mercy too. When I think what I then was, and what I now am—when I remember what you have done for my children—my sweet Mary, my noble Stanley—my heart swells, I find no room for words."

"Speak not of what I have done. I have been repaid a thousand-fold already. What we do ourselves is like water spilled upon the sand; what we do for others like that dew on the grassy plain. I know, when I come to my dying hour, the memory of what I have been enabled to do, to promote the happiness of my fellow-beings, will linger when all selfish enjoyments have passed away. I have never met with one instance of treachery or ingratitude in man. I have never suffered from those destroying elements which have often laid waste the hopes of others. Fire has never consumed my building nor floods deluged my lands. God has certainly

been very gracious to me. I feel oppressed by the weight of his unmerited goodness."

Mr. Hasselton paused, and raised his eyes above, with reverential devotion, seeing in the moon, now rising higher and higher above the dust of earth, her crimson radiance melting into gold, an image of that divine love whose influence he so deeply felt.

He dwelt on this evening's tranquil scene, because so terrible a contrast was about to be presented. Mary, unable to resist the attraction of Muza's violin, went into the meadows to join the juvenile dancers.

Muza was sitting under a tree with the moon glimmering through the boughs on his face, which was now bent obliquely over his instrument, then raised enthusiastically and thrown back in a horizontal direction.

He always seemed inspired when playing, and nothing delighted him so much as to see the nymph-like figure of Mary floating with gossamer grace on his evening serenades.

He always said she danced just like Iris, and she looked like her too, only if she had black eyes instead of blue, and black hair instead of brown, the likeness would be more complete.

Mary was much beloved by all Mr. Hasselton's people, and this night she seemed animated with unwonted hilarity, for her mood was usually quiet and serene.

"What makes Miss Mary so gay to-night, I wonder," said Dorothy. "I fear something is going to happen. The looking-glass up in mistress's room was broke to-day, nobody knows how; but it was a sperrit, sure enough, and a warning. If we had an interpreter like Nabunazzar, who told about the hand that figured on the wall, we'd know what it do mean."

"Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof, Dorothy," said Mary, laughing merrily. "I suspect the sperrit had a dusting brush in its hand, and was looking on itself too hard when the glass shivered. But, hark! there's a breeze rustling among the leaves, and there is a cloud floating below the moon. We shall surely have rain to-morrow."

The breeze which blew from the north raised such a cloud of dust that Mary was glad to escape into the shelter of the house, and when the family retired to their slumbers they looked forward to a renovating shower.

No one but Dorothy had a presentiment of evil, though it was brooding darkly and luridly over the fated mansion.

All slept deeply, securely, lulled by the murmurs of the rising wind. But the deep sleep of Mr. Hasselton began to change to an uneasy slumber.

He dreamed that he was in a trackless wilderness, in the midst of midnight darkness, and that a heavy roaring sound, as if wild beasts in the heart of that wilderness, weighed upon his ears, when the darkness was suddenly illuminated by a thousand blazing eyes, gleaming through the shadows, making a living and terrible conflagration.

With a convulsive start he shook off the nightmare with which he was gasping, and sprang up.

He was awake; but the same dull, roaring sound was in his ears. He was awake; but the blazing eyes were glaring through the window, blazing tongues were curling and hissing abroad, and mingling with the roar were cries, shouts, and shrieks of suddenly-awakened voices, while one, loud as a trumpet and deep as a drum, pealed high above the rest:

"Master—master! Fire—fire! Wake up, master, wake!"

Mrs. Hasselton started from the bed with a scream of horror.

The voice of Muza seemed rolling and echoing all round the room.

"Eliza! Eliza!" exclaimed Mr. Hasselton, who had thrown his dressing-gown round him, and rushed towards the windows to ascertain the extent of the calamity. "The flames are upon us! My God! how shall I save you? The staircase, it must be on fire!"

Seizing her hand, and throwing one arm round her, for she was paralyzed with terror, he opened the door that led towards the stairs, when the hot, scorching air drove him backward.

The flames that were roaring below came rushing and leaping upwards, licking the bannisters with their long red tongues, then darting them forward like fiery serpents, whose huge convolutions were rolling and doubling behind.

The floor quaked beneath their feet, the glass shook the walls vibrated.

Mrs. Hasselton fell heavily on the arm of her husband. She had fainted.

"God of mercy!" he ejaculated, dragging her towards the open window, where the flames glared luridly on her pallid face. "I cannot save her! She's lost! We are both lost! Poor Eliza!"

Then, with a sudden energy he lifted his voice, crying out:

"A ladder! For the love of God, a ladder!"

Before the words had left his lips, a heavy sound as of a falling body against the wall, was followed by an apparition that, seen at the open window, on the background of fire, so tall, so powerful, with blazing eyes and gleaming teeth, it looked like an archangel of darkness, coming on pious of flame.

"Mistress! mistress!" it exclaimed, "Muza come to save mistress, or die too!"

The faithful servant beheld the death-like face of his mistress drooping back from the arm of his master, and springing in through the window, he caught her, like an infant, in his strong arms, and disappeared shouting:

"Come along, master; come 'long, 'fore he burn up!"

Mr. Hasselton looked out and beheld Muza leaping from round to round of the ladder he had placed against the wall, the white night-dress of his mistress waving and fluttering against his black figure, the flames reflecting on both a supernatural glare.

Now he followed he knew not, but he reached the ground just as the ladder, that had tottered at every step, slipped and fell, and he found himself in the grasp of Lockwood, who was calling in frantic accents for his daughter.

Mary slept in a room near Mrs. Hasselton's, but farther removed from the fire, her father in the room below. In his agonizing fears for his wife, Mr. Hasselton had forgotten poor Mary, and now he repeated her name in accents of despair.

At that moment a piercing shriek from the window they had just quitted cut them through the heart, for there she stood stretching out her arms, and they could see the hot flames behind ready to burst upon her.

The paralyzed hands of the father tried in vain to lift the heavy ladder, but swift as lightning Muza sprang into their midst, and adding his mighty strength, lifted it as if it were a feather's weight, threw it against the wall, and vaulting upon it, was instantaneously on the topmost round.

Mary threw herself into his arms with a wild appeal to the mercy of heaven.

Poor Dorothy, who had gone that night to stay with a woman in the village who was suffering from rheumatism, was perfectly frantic during her darling's danger.

As soon as the alarm was given she had hurried to the scene of destruction, and seeing Mary at the window, imploring aid apparently in vain, threw herself on the ground, screaming and tearing up the earth with her hands in all the impotence of wild despair, whilst the servants were rushing to and fro, doing all they could to save their master's property and stop the progress of the flames.

"Lookee there!" cried Muza, pointing to the window from which he had just rescued Mary, who still clung trembling to his neck as he bore her towards the spot where he had left his mistress. "Lookee there! See him coming! Run away back every one of you—long way off! He fall, he kill you dead as stone! Master, come away—don't you see him?"

The fire was now indeed rolling in reddening volumes through every window of the house, and howling tempestuously within.

The northern wall of the building began to rock and lean and part, and then fell with a terrible crash. The imprisoned flames leaped up to the very heavens, and went roaring above the old pine trees, whose scorched and blackened trunks looked like gloomy pillars to a vast dome of fire.

Nothing was now to be done but to gaze on the ruin, so awfully grand, while the destroying element was clothing it with such dread magnificence.

(To be continued.)

PREHISTORIC REMAINS.—A great deal of interest was excited last year by the discovery of certain "prehistoric remains"—human bones, flint implements, and so forth—by Mr. Laing, in mounds at Calithness. The learned interpretations of Professor Huxley and Professor Owen were sought and obtained. The peculiar construction of the mounds was elaborately described by Mr. Laing. The adult skeleton was pronounced to have ape-like peculiarities; and the jawbone of an infant, which was submitted to Professor Owen, was said to have certain marks which were painfully indicative of the cannibalistic habits of our prehistoric progenitors. The Ethnological and Anthropological Societies had rival discussions, and a great deal of erudite dissertation and debate took place, which is preserved in print. At the last meeting of the former society it was broadly stated by several persons who have since examined these mounds, that not any of them contain any traces of prehistoric age. The harbour mound is composed almost entirely of limpets, and the churchyard mound of periwinkle shells! The harbour mound contained a pair of weaver's shears, and was itself the ruins of a common corn kiln of the country. The stone imple-

ments were said to be chips, such as may be collected by the barrowful. The Birkle-hills, instead of being places of worship and sacrifice, were thought to be natural hillocks of blown sand, which had served as the rendezvous of country folks on occasion of wrecks. The ape-like skeleton is declared to be the remains of a Danish seaman; and the jawbone of the child, which afforded indications of cannibalism, to have been borrowed from a neighbouring churchyard. Coins are said to have been found among these "prehistoric" remains, belonging, not to the age of the great auk, but to the reign of William III. The controversy, on the authenticity of the Abbeville jawbone, will probably fade before the battle over these mounds at Keiss. Science will grieve and orthodoxy will rejoice at these widely-differing interpretations.

THE RACE FOR LIFE.

It was the wedding day of Monof and Xavina. The rapid flood of the river Oga rolled rapidly through the village, its boiling waves flashing in the sunshine, and mingling their voices along the cliff-bound shore with the sounds of merry-making among the rude Russian peasants, who had assembled in sports upon the green in celebrating the marriage.

The priest at sunrise had made Monof and Xavina one, and after a participation in the many games peculiar to the Russian peasants of that region, the bridegroom retired with his wife, her mother, Esthonia, and her brother, Zori, to their home on the banks of the river.

"You never raced so well before," said Zori to Monof, smiling. "Marriage inspires you."

"To run away from me, perhaps," said Xavina, gazing archly at her husband. "Perhaps it would be better if he were lame."

"That may be true," said Monof, "for then I should be in no danger of being seized for the wars, whenever those accursed recruiting parties come through the country. One is already on its way hither, I have heard to-day; and who do you think commands it?"

"We cannot tell."

"None other than Chakof!"

An exclamation of surprise escaped the family. Chakof was a young man who had formerly been a rival of Monof, for the favour of Xavina.

They had quarrelled and fought, and Chakof, discomfited, had left the village and joined the army, vowing that one day he would return and be revenged.

It was true that he had obtained a leadership, and the tidings were unwelcome.

A shade passed over the bright face of the bride. She looked gloomily upon the waters.

"I begin to believe," said she, "that this is an unlucky home of ours. The roar of this stream has always been mournful to my ears. It is moaning, rough, and quarrelling, as if an enemy to all peace. I am sick to see and hear it."

"Fie! Xavina," said Esthonia. "You were born on its bank, and even so was Zori and your mother, before you. Its voice is sweet to me, though the tide is so fearfully swift hereabouts, and has been the grave of many among the rocks—but hark! Isn't that music—a trumpet?"

They listened. The sound of a trumpet at intervals, and soon after the galloping of horses, borne upon the wind, announced approaching troops.

Monof and Zori looked anxiously towards the entrance of the village, and anon they saw a body of horsemen winding through a rocky descent to the main road.

Xavina trembled.

"Let us go in, Monof," said she. "It must be Chakof. Let him not see you, or you will be taken away."

Monof's lip curled with scorn at the thought of hiding from his enemy.

"I will go out and face them," said he, proudly. "It shall never be said that I shrank from meeting Chakof—never, though this is my wedding day. Adieu for a short time, Xavina."

Kissing his pale bride, he strode towards the village green, where the peasants awaited the arrival of the troopers.

Zori followed Monof, and with heavily beating hearts the young bride and her mother entered their cottage.

Some fifty horsemen, chiefly Cossacks, with Chakof at their head, halted upon the sward.

Their martial dress and equipments attracted the admiration of the serfs, who crowded around and humbly held their bridles as they dismounted.

Chakof kept his saddle, and peered earnestly around the throng, and then, leaning over, whispered to one whom he knew.

Suddenly his face grew livid with rage.

"Married! and to-day? Married to Xavina!"

A fierce oath escaped his white lips, and his hand trembled on the rein.

"But I am not altogether too late. My revenge will be as sweet. Where is he? Where is Monof?"

The question was needless, for as he raised his head to look, Monof and Zori stood close by, the former gazing at him defiantly.

"Aha! my gay bridegroom," sneered Chakof, in a loud tone; "we have come rather late to honour the wedding. But we will honour you with a ride, nevertheless. Seize that man!"

In an instant Monof was seized by two of the dismounted horsemen—Chakof, with lifted sabre, menacing any who showed signs of disapprobation.

"In the name of the Czar!" he shouted. "Who opposes it?"

"Shame, Chakof!" said Zori, red with indignation. "This is his marriage-day."

"I know it full well," said the officer, with a bitter smile, "and the time is more fitting for my revenge. To the wars he goes, in spite of heaven! Other encounters than those of love shall employ his strength, and we will see how they will work with his beauty. Men of Ischeva! I seize him alone, though I might take a score of you, if I chose. Monof shall go, and I will leave Zori to choose another mate for his beautiful sister, for I have no doubt Xavina will be a widow shortly!"

"Knavel!" shouted Zori, springing forward, "you shall not live to see it." But he was withheld from his purpose by his friends, who saw the danger to which his anger exposed him.

But Monof was not so easily thwarted. The foremost athlete of the village, his strength was immense. He was the leading leaper and runner of Ischeva; and embracing the moment when the movement of Zori averted the attention of those who held him, he hurled them both to the ground, and instantly vaulting to the back of the horse of Chakof, he clutched him by the throat, from behind.

The steed, affrighted, dashed through the throng, sped away some twenty rods, and then reared and threw both riders, Monof still clinging to his foe. But the speedy assistance of the troopers relieved their captain from the impending death he merited.

The adversaries were raised and separated, Chakof bruised, bleeding and panting, and hoarse with excitement.

Death might at once been the fate of Monof, in the hands of the Cossacks, but for their admiration of his daring and the bodily prowess he had displayed.

"Slay the slave at once!" shouted Chakof.

But the soldiers hesitated, and their chief suddenly bethought him of another mode of vengeance.

Advancing to Monof, now held by half-a-dozen Cossacks, he stooped and flung a handful of dirt in his face.

The dastardly act was followed with loud hisses and murmurs of disgust by all who witnessed it.

"Venomous coward!" cried Zori, still held back by his fellow-villagers. "Oh that he had you on the fair field; he would soon scatter you over the fair earth which you pollute."

"I will give him a fair field," said Chakof, remounting his steed with a scornful laugh. "A fair field and a chance for life, as this—" he added, with a mocking scowl—"is his wedding-day. See! It is a mile to yonder cliffs at the bend of the river. Monof is a good runner. It has been a boast for him that he could race with a horse of Tartary, and win. Set him a furlong in advance, and let a dozen horsemen follow. If he escapes their sabres and reaches the river, let the waters do as they will with him, and we will march away."

"Generous man!" muttered Monof. "But I accept the terms."

Murmurs at the cruel meanness of the conditions were general among the peasants, and even the Cossacks asked that the victim might have a weapon, that they might not be compelled to hunt so gallant a man unarmed.

"Give him a sabre," pleaded Zori.

"No, a club—a heavy club," said Chakof, knowing that its weight would impede the flight.

"I will take nothing," said Monof, hopelessly. "Farewell, Zori; bear my heart's best love to Xavina. Farewell, friends. I am ready."

"Haste and place him," exclaimed Chakof, impatiently, for, as he spoke, he saw, approaching the mother and the bride, Esthonia and Xavina, who had become alarmed at the confusion they had witnessed at a distance, and feared the worst.

Monof was led to the spot prescribed, and as the word was given, a shriek from Xavina, who had just heard the fearful truth, pierced his ears, but did not unman him.

It put more nerve into his limbs, as he bounded forward on that race for life.

Xavina sank senseless as she marked the twelve horsemen follow, with shouts and drawn sabres, and, with her mother, was borne homeward by Zori and a

few friends—the rest remaining, with eyes intent upon the fugitive scene.

With the speed of the wind fled the hapless Monof, over the plains, his only hope in his well-tried limbs, which had so often enabled him to bear the palm from all competitors.

Now, life and love urged him to miraculous swiftness, and his career extorted praise even from his fleet pursuers, who, well-mounted as they were, could but loudly express their wonder at his wondrous progress, which for about the first half-mile seemed about to equal their own.

Chakof remained motionless in his saddle for a while, conscious of the hatred with which he had inspired those around him, who uttered audible prayers for the intervention of heaven.

"He will never reach the gorge!" exultingly cried Chakof, as the horsemen were seen rapidly diminishing the distance between them and their prey. "Now they are almost upon him—and now they have overtaken him—now he perishes! But no—the muskals; they permit him to keep ahead again."

It was even so. On coming up with Monof the Cossacks, two-thirds of the distance already consumed, by common consent slackened their speed, as if ashamed to destroy a man who contested the race so gallantly, and perhaps in their wild bosoms kindled some tender thoughts of loved ones whom they had left, and they thought of the bride with pity.

Whatever the motive, they suffered Monof to gain a little, but still pressed on, and soon overtook him again—passed him, encircled him, waved their keen blades above his head—but still forbore to strike.

"They are sporting with me!" roared the infuriated Chakof, observing their movements, and putting spurs to his horse in pursuit. "I will soon end their game."

Astonished at the delay of his pursuers, Monof, who had turned and faced them, expecting instant death, became emboldened; and as one of the Cossacks neared him, he leaped lightly from the ground, and dropping astride his beast endeavoured to unhorse him.

The desperate effort was too much for him, and he might easily have fallen a victim to the swords of the others, but for their increased compassion for such heroism in misfortune.

They kept aloof, and shouted to their comrade to dismount. To the surprise of Monof he did so, leaving him to fix himself in the saddle.

"I give you my beast and my sabre, good youth," said the grim trooper. "Make the most of them, for see! Our captain is coming."

Monof looked back and beheld the approach of Chakof, and forgetting for an instant the danger by which he was surrounded, wheeled to meet and combat with his blood-thirsty foe; but the Cossack's steel refused to obey the new rider, rearing and plunging, and finally falling headlong to the earth, just at the perilous moment when Chakof, his mouth filled with curses upon the horsemen, rushed upon the spot.

Aiming a blow at the nearest, he lost control of his steed, whose manueverable career bore him full upon the fallen horse, over which, with thundering shock, both horse and rider stumbled, and for the second time that day Chakof was rolled upon the earth—this time to the no little joy of the men of his command.

Hastily rising, with gestures and imprecations, he demanded another horse, that he might overtake Monof, who at the very instant his own horse had become prostrate, retaining the sabre, had sprung forward on his course again with new hope, though greatly exhausted.

"The furies seize you! Quick! Dismount! or he will escape!" shrieked Chakof, pulling an unwilling Cossack from his saddle, and mounting himself, again pressing on with hot haste, as he now saw the panting Monof nearing the rapid river, but with slackened pace.

"Follow, knaves!" shouted Chakof, "and see me throw his carcass into the Oga."

Chuckling among themselves at his partial discomfiture, the Cossacks followed at a moderate trot, shouting, at intervals, derisively, their famous war cry of "Hurrah!"

The shadow of the rocky gorge which opened to the cliffs of the river was barely attained by the flying Monof, when he heard the hoofs of Chakof's steed behind him, clattering against the sharp, loose rocks.

"Holy mother, nerve me for one more struggle!" he exclaimed, and darting up a ledge on one side of the gorge, he gained a sufficient elevation to enable him to aim a sudden and effective blow upon the head of his pursuer, as he burst headlong into the passageway.

Chakof reeled in his saddle, and was unable to check the momentum of his beast, which pressed on to the very verge of the cliff which overhung the river, and there fell.

Scarce had the groan of Chakof passed his bleeding

lips, ere Monof was upon him, the blood streaming from his nostrils, and the river of hope at his feet.

"Now for the waters of the Oga!" cried Monof, with a wild scream of joy, as he pounced upon his half-risen enemy.

They clutched and rolled together over the dizzy height of the steep bank, into the deep and boiling gulf below, the anguished cry of Chakof smothered in the whirling waves, as the pursuer and pursued sank into their bosom.

In their fall a small tree had been grappled by Chakof, and, torn from its roots in the bank, was carried with them in their terrible descent.

The Cossacks arrived at the summit of the cliff at the moment when the adversaries regained the surface, each clinging to the tree.

But the gripe of Chakof was his death-gripe. His head had struck a hidden rock, and the living and the dead sailed down the stream together.

The swartly Cossacks shrugged their shoulders as they looked, and after a brief conference, turned their horses' heads and rejoined their comrades on the plain, and there among them it was resolved at once to march on, leaving the corpse of the leader they had hated to the will of the waters, where he had met a death he merited.

So they gathered in order again, and their trumpets blew, and their mettlesome steeds bore the rude troopers away within the hour, but not till with eager satisfaction they had learned the fate of Monof.

Down the river he sailed rapidly, refreshed by the cool waters which wound their swift course towards his home, and there the river's bend brought him within a rod of the shore—the corpse of Chakof still clinging, ghastly, to the tree.

The delivered bridegroom plunged into the stream and gained the bank, staggering with a faint cry into the arms of Zori and Xavina, while the grey-haired Esthonia lifted her eyes and hands to heaven, in a prayer of thanks to the Strengtheners of the helpless.

And while the villagers of Ischeva were renewing their rejoicing at the happy termination of that threatening day the body of the malignant Chakof was borne on to unknown dissolution, and the echoes of the receding trumpeters grew fainter and fainter among the Russian hills.

W. O. E.

OSMOND.

CHAPTER X.

It was nearly fifteen minutes after Maxwell had given up in despair of receiving any assistance in his misery, though to him it seemed an age of torment, that he was aroused to a glimmer of hope by the sound of some one descending a ladder near him, and in a moment more the light of a lantern shone into the bunk in which he lay.

With a painful effort he turned over upon his side, and made out to distinguish the outlines of a human form standing near him.

"For humanity's sake, sir, whoever you be, take these cruel cords from my limbs!" faintly exclaimed Maxwell, as he saw that the man was gazing into his bunk. "If I am to be murdered, let it be at once—do not kill me by inches thus!"

The man stood a moment, as if undecided what to do, and then he turned and re-ascended the ladder. Again Maxwell gave himself up to despair, and groaned in the bitterness of his sufferings; but ere many moments had passed the sounds of descending footsteps were again heard, and this time there were two men.

"We isn't obliged to keep the poor fellow in sufferin' as I knows on," remarked one of them, as he reached the floor.

"No," returned the other, "there's no need o' that."

"I say, shipmate," exclaimed the man who held the lantern, "bud your ruffles a little uncomfortable, eh?"

Maxwell felt his heart swell at this unfeeling remark, but he had good sense enough to keep his indignation to himself, and in an imploring tone, he said:

"They are killing me, sir—literally drawing out my life in the most excruciating pain. For the love of heaven, either loosen them, or kill me at once!"

"Well, if we'll let you go on deck to take a bit of fresh air, will you promise not to make any noise? not to speak a word that can be heard outside o' the lighter?"

"Anything you may ask I will most solemnly promise, so that you loose these cords and let me breathe the pure air," exclaimed Maxwell in return.

The man who held the lantern set it down, and having called his companion to his assistance, they lifted the young man from the bunk, and proceeded to cast off the cords from his feet and legs, after which they unloosened the pinions upon his arms.

"You'll just excuse me for this, sir," he of the lantern remarked, as he took the cord he had last cast off, and proceeded to bind Maxwell's wrists together in front, "cause, ye see, we've got to look well to your honour, that ye don't get away from us."

The young man made no answer to this, for he saw that his captor was putting the cord on in such a manner that it would not pain him, and in a few moments he was told that he might follow them on deck.

As the cool night-breeze swept over the fevered brow of the prisoner his heart swelled with a new life, and though it had been with the greatest difficulty that he made his way up the ladder, yet when once seated on the low transom, with his limbs relieved of their torturing bonds, he felt almost as though he had not been so tortured.

The tide thus far had been on the flow, and as there was but little wind, the lighter had made only a few miles headway, but shortly after Maxwell came on deck the tide turned upon the ebb, and with the wind from the northward and westward she began to lumber along with considerable rapidity. There was light enough from the moon, which was just rising, to enable our hero to distinguish the various objects on shore, but of course he knew nothing of the landmarks, and consequently had no means of telling where he was, only he knew that he was going down the river, as the moon, which made out to struggle through the fog, plainly indicated.

There were six men on the deck of the lighter, and the young officer was confident that they composed her whole crew, while he who had unloosened his bonds seemed to be the captain.

There was no light about the deck, the helmsman being only guided by well-known objects upon the shore, so that Maxwell could see but little of the countenances of those about him, but from the conversation and occasional exclamations that fell upon his ears he was not at a loss to tell that he was in the company of a precious set of villains.

Under the influence of the fresh air, with his blood now circulating freely through his veins, the fever began to leave the young man's system, and in the course of fifteen minutes after he came on deck, he felt greatly relieved.

The skipper stood leaning against the quarter rail, close by the spot where the prisoner sat, and after the lighter had passed Woolwich, Maxwell turned to him and asked:

"Have you the charge of my person?"

"Well," returned the man thus addressed, in a sort of careless air, "I s'pose you're under my sailin' orders for the present."

"And will you tell me what you intend to do with me?"

"You'd feel full as easy not to be too wise on that pint," laconically returned the skipper.

"But you surely do not intend to murder me in cool blood!" uttered Maxwell, for the first time giving a real thought to such a probability.

"Couldn't say as to that, sir. I'm under orders from them as is better able to judge about such matters."

"Tell me that, at least," urged the young man; "for I am not coward enough to quail before mortal power. Is it your intention to kill me?"

"Oh, no," returned the skipper, in a tone as cool and unconcerned as though he had been arranging for the disposal of merchandise. "I ain't goin' to kill you, only there's one thing I should think you might know. Your company isn't wanted in London, and them as has got you out o' the way will take pretty good care that you don't come back again."

"But will you not tell me how far your orders go?"

"Couldn't possibly do it under any circumstances, but when it comes you'll know it, as the bo's'n's mate said to the man as was strippin' for a floggin'."

Maxwell saw that he should get nothing farther from the skipper of the lighter, and he determined to ask no more questions.

His hope was not entirely gone, for in the course of his eventful life he had been nearer to the gates of death than he was now, and yet he had escaped.

Something in his soul—a "still small voice" that whispered seemingly from the book of fate—told him that all was not yet lost. With reviving strength came renewed the hope that his destiny was not yet told upon earth.

Shortly after he ceased questioning the skipper, he felt the power of fatigue so strongly upon him that he laid his head back upon the taffarel, and fell into an uneasy, dreamy slumber.

There was no point, no regularly defined idea to his dreams, but over him and beneath him, and all about him, there seemed to be a black mass of tumultuous, contending storm-clouds, with only one break in the whole frowning zoneless canopy, but from that one spot shone forth a single gleam of light that penetrated his soul with a gladsome emotion.

It seemed first to be his eastern star struggling

through the clouds, but gradually it took a new, a brighter form; and the soft, beaming features of Rosalind Hubert looked forth upon him.

How long he remained in this region of varying dreamland he had no means of determining, but when he awoke it was from a rough shake of his shoulders, and he found the morning sun had gained considerable advance in its diurnal journey.

"Come, sir, you'll have to go below for a spell," said the skipper, with his hand still upon the young man's shoulder. "That ere town off there is Gravesend, an' I expect the revenue officers 'll board us. Now I want you to partic'larly remember 'at you are a sick man 'at we is carryin' out to Sheerness. You'll do it quietly, I s'pose?"

The manner in which this was spoken plainly indicated that there was such a thing as forcing the prisoner to do his bidding, and readily assenting to the proposal, Maxwell went below and turned into his bunk.

In the course of fifteen minutes a boat came alongside, but there was only one officer, and he passed the lighter without coming into the cabin, and after he had gone the young man was again permitted to go on deck.

It was now past nine o'clock, the lighter having made only about twenty-five miles since she hauled out from the dock in London, but the wind had now freshened to a good breeze, and the tide, for the last three hours, had been in her favour.

Maxwell had again taken his seat upon the transom, and was engaged in watching the various buildings upon the shore when the skipper came aft and touched him upon the arm.

Now that daylight had revealed the features of the man who held him in charge, Maxwell could not but shudder as he viewed them.

Upon every lineament of them the word "villain" was written as plainly as mortal hand could have done it, and there was that coldness and heartlessness about them that revealed a character befitting the hired murderer.

"Well, shipmate," said this specimen of depraved humanity, without other expressions than that of a determined recklessness, "we'll be out at sea in a little while, an' as I've no objections to any man's prayin' afore he dies, you can have the privilege, but you'd better begin pretty soon."

"Thou heartless, lying villain," exclaimed Maxwell, starting to his feet, "you told me that you were not going to kill me!"

"Neither is I," returned the skipper. "I's only goin' to lash your legs once more, an' then give you a chance to swim across the German Ocean, that's all."

The heart of Osmond Maxwell recoiled in horror from the idea of such a death, but ere he could utter a reply the skipper had turned upon his heel and walked forward.

Fifteen minutes more passed, and Sheerness Fort was brought in sight upon the starboard bow. The skipper again came aft, and ordered the lighter to be brought up to a north-east course, and just as the sheets had been belayed the helmsman's attention was arrested by the appearance of a large yacht which had just passed Leigh on its way down the river, and turning to his superior, he remarked:

"Wonder what that chap's doin' out here?"

"What is that?" asked the skipper.

"That yacht."

The skipper looked a moment upon the coming boat, and then said:

"Some pleasure party, I s'pose, from Greenwich. She'll land on Sheppey Island."

"No," returned the helmsman, after watching the stranger for a few moments, "she's hauled her wind, an' is stan'in' this way."

The skipper went below and got his spyglass, and after a few moments' observation he turned to his helmsman, and remarked:

"She's nothin'. Only four men aboard—bound 'round on to the Essex coast somewhere."

The lighter lumbered along through the water, while the yacht, with every rag of canvas on, came rapidly cutting her way through the waves, and in the course of half an hour she had ranged up alongside, about two cables' length to the windward.

"What does that mean?" uttered the helmsman.

As he spoke the yacht had put up her helm, and ceased off her sheets, and as her head paid off, she seemed aiming to run under the lighter's stern.

Maxwell was for the time forgotten by the skipper, or he would have surely been ordered below, and as he now got sight of the yacht's deck his heart leaped with a wild delicious bound, for he recognised it at once as Lord Wilton's. Every fear was gone, every pain was forgotten, for he knew that he had friends near at hand.

The yacht came cutting through the water under the lighter's stern, and in a moment more she put down her helm, and ere the skipper was hardly

aware of what was going on, she had grated along upon his lee rail.

Up from the yacht's cabin came a score of the London police, with old Paul Marline at their head, and with a loud shout the old man sprang upon the lighter's rail and leaped down upon her deck.

The skipper met him at the gangway and essayed to stop his progress, but with one blow of his huge fist Paul felled him upon the main-hatch, and then sprang aft.

Osmond Maxwell put forth his bound hands, and with a heart overflowing with gratitude and joy, he fell upon his foster-father's bosom; but Paul spoke not till he had first cast off the corded manacles from the wrists of his protégé—then he clasped the young man to his bosom, and while the happy tears rolled down his furrowed cheeks, he exclaimed:

"Thank heaven, Max, you're safe!"

Maxwell raised his head and gazed into his protector's kind face, and while a gratitude that might not be spoken in words irradiated his features, he uttered:

"Oh, Paul, what do I not owe you. In half an hour I should have been lost to you for ever, but you, you have saved me!"

"There, there, Max,—don't—you'll make me blubber like a child. We'll talk about it when we get back. Them villains 'll soon be bound, but I won't help do it, for I feel happy now, an' I should put my hands on their mean bodies 'twould make me feel ugly."

In fifteen minutes the lighter's crew had been all bound and conveyed on board the yacht, and leaving their own boat under the charge of Paul Marline, the yacht's crew took charge of the lighter, to carry her back to London, and long before night the villains were safely lodged in the hands of the authorities; while Maxwell, hardly noticing the lameness of his limbs, sat within his own room at the hotel and related to Paul the circumstances of his adventure, and, in turn, received the old man's account of the manner in which he got upon the chase.

CHAPTER XI.

WHEN Maxwell and Paul had finished their supper, the old man remarked to his protégé that he was going out for a few moments, and requested the young man to retire to his room and seek that repose which he so much needed.

An hour passed away, and Maxwell was beginning to feel uneasy with regard to his foster father's prolonged absence, when the door of the room was opened, and the object of his anxiety entered.

"Where have you been, Paul?" asked Maxwell, as his countenance lighted up.

"I've been to see a leddy, Max," the old man returned, while a peculiar smile, half roguish in its expression, played around the corners of his mouth.

"A lady, Paul?"

"Yes, a lady."

Maxwell gazed into the old man's face, but though he spoke not, yet Paul knew the question he would ask, and in a somewhat serious tone, he continued:

"I've been to see Rosalind Hubert, Max, for I promised her this mornin' 'at I would let her know as soon as I found you. An' I tell ye, Max, it did my old heart good to see how she smiled and wept by turns, when I told her 'at you was safe. Ah, Max, I'm afoared she ain't all right here about you."

As the old man spoke, he placed his hand significantly upon his heart, at the same time bending upon his protégé a searching, meaning look.

A happy, grateful smile lit up the features of Osmond Maxwell as he heard the old sailor's account of the manner in which Rosalind had received the intelligence of his safety, and in a frank tone, he said:

"I will conceal nothing from you, Paul; but if you think Rosalind's heart is not all right, then you are much mistaken. She loves me, Paul."

"Yes, yes, Max, I know that. Though I don't know 'at I was over in love w' anything but yourself an' the flag of Old England, yet it didn't take but half a look to tell me 'at the leddy was in love w' you. It's a pity, Max, but then she hadn't ought to've done it. Howsomever, praps she'll soon get over it."

Maxwell could not resist the smile that broke over his features at the simple honesty of his old friend, but at length, while the smile left his face, seeming to settle back upon his gladsome heart, he returned:

"You do not understand the matter, Paul—Rosalind Hubert not only loves me, but I love her."

"So much the worse, Max,"

"But I have told her that I love her, and she has confessed her love is return. She is mine, Paul, and I am hers."

A moment the old man gazed in blank astonishment upon the face of his protégé. That astonishment, however, began slowly to disappear, and gradually a light broke in that soon overspread his

features, and to himself he thought of the strange questions that Lord Wilton had put to him; but without betraying the thoughts that moved him, he simply said:

"She's a noble girl, Max, an' if she is ever your wife, she'll have as good a husband as ever trod the earth."

"She'll have a faithful husband, Paul."

"That indeed she will," returned the old man.

For some time after this remark was made, the two companions remained given up each to his own thoughts.

Maxwell dwelt upon the fair being who had been the subject of the conversation, while Paul, if one might judge from the anxious glances which he furtively cast towards his protégé, was diving into a sea of pointless surmises on the subject of the strange manner in which Lord Wilton had questioned him concerning young Maxwell's childhood. At length the young lieutenant raised his eyes to the face of his companion, and said:

"Paul, all my hopes of happiness, or, at least, of immediate happiness, depend upon our weathering Sir Philip Hubert. I have pledged myself to the Lady Rosalind, that her uncle's power over her should be overcome."

"An' we can do it, Max,"

"So I believe."

"But I know it, Max."

"Know it, Paul?"

"Yes, I've got the weather-gage of 'im, an' I can overhail him at any moment."

"But tell me, Paul," exclaimed the young man, as he started from his seat, "you have not—"

"Yes, I have, Max," interrupted the old man.

"I've opened that locker, an' I've found Sir Philip's number!"

"And do you know him for the villain you thought him?" asked Maxwell, as he grasped the old man's arm.

"I never told ye, Max, 'at I thought he was a villain."

"But you surely intimated it," uttered the young officer, in a sort of disappointed tone, while the shade of his hope grew a degree less distinct.

"Praps I did," replied Paul; and then, taking Maxwell's hand from his arm, he continued: "Now you set down in your 'big chair agin, an' I'll spin ye the whole yarn, from beginnin' to end."

Maxwell did as his old friend had directed, and having stowed away a fresh quid of pipe-stem within his cheek—an accompaniment without which he seldom ventured any extended remarks—Paul settled himself back into his seat and commenced:

"The first year 'at I was chief 'olm's mate o' the old Thunderer—that is ten years ago—you was a small boy, Max, only ten years old, an' of course you don't remember many o' the particulars 'at turned up in that cruise. Our old ship had been ordered on to the coast of Comandul, to cruise arter a pirate 'at had been troublin' our East Indiamen, and arter cruisin' about for nearly a month we spoke a merchantman just off of Madras 'at had been overhauled and robbed by this pirate the day before, an' from her we learned 'at the scamps had hauled off towards the southern coast, arter they'd got all the plunder they wanted. Well, we got a pretty good 'scription o' the pirate's vessel from the skipper o' the merchantman, an' then we hauled our wind for the coast. Praps you remember it, Max?"

"No, not distinctly, Paul. I've come across so many such scenes that those which transpired so far back as that are rather mixed up and mingled indistinctly together in my memory."

"Well," continued Paul, "the next mornin' arter we got on to the coast, the lookout at the fore-gallant crossrees reported 'at he could see the top-hammer of a craft just over a pint of land 'at made out a little to the south'rd o' St. Thome. The cap'n called me aft an' ordered me to take a glass an' go aloft an' see 'I could make out anything of her. So I took the glass, an' I hadn't no sooner got it levelled, than I knowed 'at them spars—I could see as far down as her main-top—belonged to the pirate 'at the merchant skipper had described to us. As soon as I told the cap'n this, he ordered the top-gallant sails and r'ials to be taken in, an' in half an hour we doubled the pint, and there, sure enough, 'bout half a mile up a little stream, lay the very chapp. We knowed 'at the old frigate couldn't git up there, so we called away the barge an' the three cutters, an' with about fifty men, all told, we started off in the boats. Our first luff had charge o' the first cutter, an' I was with 'im. Of course we expected nothing, but 'at the pirate 'd fire into us, but instead o' that they lowered their boats an' put for the shore, and as soon as our first luff saw this game, he ordered all hands to land an' give chase. The villains turned an' fired about a messen full o' musket balls at us, an' then ran like mad. One of our middies was killed on the spot, an' one or two of the men was wounded; but 'at only made it

worse for them, for the moment the middy fell every one of the frigate's men swore they'd be revenged, and after 'em we started.

"About four cables' length from the shore there was a small steep hill, an' over this most of the pirates steered, but four on 'em hailed their wind an' went 'round it on the larboard hand, an' without notice' who followed in my wake I gave 'em chase, but when I got 'round the hill I found myself in rather a ticklish mess. Right ahead there was a deep jungle swamp, which separated me from them as had gone over the hill, an' I had the satisfaction of finding myself fetched up all stan' in w' all four of the pirates to deal with; but in a minute more I found 'at old Jack Collar, one o' the capt'ns of our fore-top, had followed me, an' I felt a good deal better. The moment the pirates fetched up agin the jungle swamp they turned, an' one on 'em 'Faw was the capt'n.' I knowed him, cause he was regular swab. Well, Jack an' I both fired, but as bad luck would have it, we both aimed at the same man; howsomever he fell, so that left us only three to deal with. The three pirates fired, an' Jack got one o' the balls in his left arm, but I wasn't touched, an' Jack didn't notice his hurt much, for he drew his other pistol, an' let rip at the villain nearest to 'im, an' we had the satisfaction of seeing him tumble on his beam ends. I hadn't fired my second pistol yet, cause I wanted it for sure aim, an' just as the two men as was left fired again, I took the chance and fired, too, and my ball did nobly, for it knocked down its man; but when I turned to look at Jack, I found him settin' on the ground w' his head in his lap. I didn't stop to speak to him, howsomever, for I saw the pirate capt'n comin' towards me, an' whippin' out my cutlass I stood ready for him. He struck a blow at my head as he came up, but I fended it off, an' then at it we went. He was savage, an' so was I. His cutlass was the longest, but mine was the heaviest. He fought like a tiger, but I soon saw 'at I was his better w' the cutlass, an' at last, just as he fetched a real ugly lunge at my breast, I gave him a blow 'at broke it short off at the hilt. In course, I was sure I had 'im then, an' I'd struck soon enough. I should, but the villain had another pistol, an' jumpin' back, while I stopped a second to take breath, he drew it an' let drive at me. The ball struck me just below the right knee, an' I dropped, an' just then I heard a shout behind me, an' in a few moments half a dozen of our men came up, but the pirate capt'n took to the jungle as soon as he see 'em, an' we lost 'im. Poor Jack Collar never spoke agin, for he had a ball right through his head; but my hurt was easily fixed, as the bone wasn't shattered much, an' in the course of a couple o' months I was on my pegs agin. You remember that, Max?"

"Yes," returned Maxwell, in breathless suspense; "but go on—go on, Paul."

"Well, we got the pirate's brig, an' thirty-one o' the pirates themselves, an' we only lost six men. Now, Max, who d'ye think that pirate capt'n was?"

"Who? Who, Paul?" uttered Maxwell, while by the nervous clutching of his hands he seemed to hold himself in his place.

"Omond Maxwell, it was nobody but Sir Philip Hubert!"

"Do you speak honestly, Paul? Do you mean 'his?' asked the young man, almost afraid to trust the evidence of his own senses. "Do you mean that Sir Philip Hubert and this pirate captain are one and the same person?"

"It's just as true as there's a heaven," returned the old man.

Maxwell knew from Paul's manner that he not only spoke the truth, but that he was confident of his strange recognition, and for some time he dwelt upon the event in silence.

At length he said, in a somewhat disappointed manner:

"And you, Paul, were the only one who recognized him, or rather, saw his face distinctly at that time?"

"I'm the only one living!"

"O, I'm afraid that the villain will get clear of your single testimony. You remember what Lord Walbourn told us concerning the manner in which he had escaped a dozen such accusations as this?"

"Yes, I know all that," returned Paul. "But I tell ye, Max, 'at we can bring him up with a round turn now! I know 'twas Bunk Welland 'at got me off, an' got you off too—an' I know 'at he was with Sir Philip ten minutes afore you left the house last night. Now we'll let the villains rest till Lord Wilton comes, an' then we'll put the whole business into his hands, an' 'e can't overhaul Sir Philip with all these p'ints of the compass for a leadin' wind, then I'll go back to the Indies an' set my foot in England agin, that's all, Max."

"Well," returned the young man, after a few moments' deliberation, "I don't think you'll be obliged to do that. God will not surely let such a villain escape."

And with this hope, if not conviction, Maxwell

retired to his rest, for his limbs were weary and sore, and his mind tired beneath the varied weight that lay upon it.

CHAPTER XII.

On the next morning, though Maxwell was by no means severely indisposed, yet he requested that his breakfast might be brought to his room.

Old Paul, under the influence of a habit which he could not shake off, had already eaten his morning's meal, and so while his *protégé* was engaged in the same occupation, he sat near by poring over the columns of the morning's paper. The young man had nearly finished his meal, when an exclamation from the old man made him start.

"What is it, Paul?" he asked, at the same time laying down an egg-glass which he held in his hand.

"Just read that," returned Paul, as he handed over the paper, and pointed out the paragraph that had arrested his attention.

Maxwell took the paper and read as follows:

"REAL ESTATE FOR SALE.—We are requested to state upon authority for the present holder that the splendid estate in Berkeley Square lately belonging to Lord Colford, now deceased, will be immediately sold, together with all the furniture, plate, pictures, &c., &c. If not sold within three days from date at private sale, the same will be disposed of under the hammer, the holder being under the necessity of immediately returning to India."

"P. S.—As a mere settlement of this estate is the only object in view, this chance will afford a rare bargain to some gentleman who is desirous of purchasing an eligible city residence."

"There, what d'ye think o' that, Max?" uttered Paul, as the young man rested the paper upon his knee.

"I think if Sir Philip is not soon brought up he'll escape us yet, for he evidently intends to make his escape from England as soon as possible."

Hardly had Maxwell spoken, when there came a rap upon the door.

"Walk in."

"There be two gentlemen below as wants to speak with ye, sir," said one of the footmen, poking his head in at the door.

"Well, clear away these dishes, and then show them up," returned Maxwell.

It was but the work of a moment for the servant to remove the salver upon which the young officer's breakfast had been served, and in a few minutes afterwards Lord Wilton entered the apartment, accompanied by an aged stranger.

"My dear Maxwell, I am glad to find you looking so well," exclaimed his lordship, as he grasped the young man by the hand. "I have heard of your yesterday's adventure, and I feared you might have fared worse."

"No, my lord," returned Maxwell, not a little flattered by the friendly manner of so distinguished a noble; "thanks to my kind old foster-father, I got off in safety."

Wilton extended to Paul a friendly greeting, and then turning to where stood the stranger, he said, as he led him towards the young officer:

"Mr. Marmaduke, allow me to make you acquainted with Mr. Maxwell, the young officer of whom I have told you. Mr. Maxwell, Mr. Godfrey Marmaduke."

Mr. Godfrey Marmaduke was a pale, sickly-looking man, with a look of uncommon intelligence. He wore a grey suit of short clothes, peculiar to the lower grade of the Yorkshire gentry, his head being ornamented by a huge white periwig which ended behind in a long, neatly bound queue.

His eyes sparkled with a peculiar light as he took Maxwell by the hand, and at the first glance our hero was assured that he saw a man in whom he might trust as a friend.

"Have you seen the morning papers, Mr. Maxwell?" asked Lord Wilton, after the usual salutations between our two friends and Mr. Marmaduke had been passed.

"Yes, my lord," returned Maxwell, "I had just laid one of them down as you were announced."

"Sir Philip is commencing in good earnest," remarked Wilton.

"He is, indeed," returned Maxwell, "and we must be on the alert if we would prevent his infamous designs. Have you seen Mr. Montfort yet?"

"Yes, I called upon him last evening, in company with Mr. Marmaduke. I have been made acquainted with all Sir Philip's proceedings thus far, and," continued his lordship, at the same time casting upon Maxwell a meaning, half-smiling glance, "I saw the Lady Rosalind last evening, and from her I gained an inkling of the proceedings of some one else, who, it seems, has some peculiar designs with regard to her welfare."

"Lord Wilton," stammered the young man, while the rich blood mounted in a crimson flood to his somewhat pale face.

"There, you needn't be ashamed of what you've done, my boy," exclaimed Wilton, with a good-natured smile. "I happened to be in the house last night when Paul came with his message, though he knew it not, and I could not but observe the effect which his intelligence had upon her mind, and so, my dear fellow, I had the curiosity to question Rosa rather particularly; the result of which was, that I learned that, while her uncle was trying to rob her of her property, you had actually stolen away her heart."

"And I trust, my lord, that you will not blame me for that which I have done," uttered Maxwell, gaining courage from the kind manner of his lordship.

"Oh, not by any means," Wilton said. "You have given your heart in return, and as the lady seems satisfied with the exchange, I suppose the matter must rest there for the present. But you know, Sir Philip must first be disposed of, for you may never hope to arrive at the consummation of such a project till his power is overcome."

"And that can be done, sir?" exclaimed Maxwell, with much energy. "We have the most conclusive proofs of his connection with the cowardly attempts upon our lives, and Paul has recognized him as a base villain of an old stamp."

"Ah," uttered Wilton, turning to the old sailor, "and have you found your lost secret, Paul?"

"Yes, sir—I know the villain just like a signal-book!"

"Then let's have it," returned Wilton, as he turned his chair about, and disposed himself in a listening position.

Old Paul cleared his throat, and then spun the yarn of his adventure with the pirates on the coast of Madras, during which Lord Wilton and Marmaduke exchanged many and significant glances, seeming the while to be most deeply interested. At its conclusion, Maxwell said:

"Now, Lord Wilton, can you not, with all these circumstances, contrive to bring the villain to justice?"

"Not yet, not yet," returned his lordship, in a thoughtful mood. "I have another hold upon him now. He will not dispose of the property as easily as he imagines; for Mr. Marmaduke, here, has a full claim upon the Yorkshire estate, and he also holds Lord Colford's own bond and mortgage upon the estate which Sir Philip has advertised for sale. I assure you, Mr. Maxwell, that Marmaduke's visit to London at this time is most opportune, for, in days gone by, he has had some curious dealings with Sir Philip."

"Oh, sir," uttered Maxwell, while his face became bright beneath the flashes of the hope just given him, "if Mr. Marmaduke can aid us in this, my lasting gratitude shall be his, and if ever fortune brings her wheel about to an opportunity, I will repay him with more than words. Do not place my feelings to a wrong motive, sir," the young man continued, as he noticed that Godfrey Marmaduke was regarding him with the most intense interest. "I assure you, sir, there is no selfishness in the feeling. Though I would give all but my own honest manhood for Rosalind's happiness, yet had I resolved upon freeing her from this base villain's power before I had dared to think of loving her. Throwing the peculiar position in which I stand to the lady out of the question, I would do only for her in this case what I would do for any unprotected orphan."

Old Godfrey's eyes sparkled with a strange light as the young man spoke, and grasping him by the hand, he uttered:

"I believe you, sir—indeed I do; and now let me assure you that if some unforeseen circumstance does not prevent the execution of my plans, Sir Philip will have opportunity to commit but little more of his wickedness."

"Blow me if I shouldn't just like to give 'im one more chance to put a ball through my knee," uttered Paul, doubling up both of his huge fists and laying them upon his knees, as though he even now anticipated the pleasure.

Lord Wilton smiled at the old sailor's earnest remark, and then laying his hand upon Maxwell's arm, he said:

"Now, Mr. Maxwell, we will let Sir Philip rest for a while, and enter upon a business which principally concerns yourself, and for which I have claimed Mr. Marmaduke's presence at the present time and place."

"A business relating to me, sir?" responded the young man, in some surprise.

"Yes, Maxwell—and something, too, that cannot fail to prove highly interesting to one in your position."

Maxwell gazed at his lordship with a wondering look, and anxiously awaited an explanation.

"Paul," said Wilton, turning to the old sailor, "you told me, I believe, that it was nineteen years ago that you picked up the child, whom you have since reared to a man?"

"Nineteen years ago this summer, sir," replied Paul, opening his eyes wider than usual, "I picked 'im up in the Bay o' Bengal, an' there he sets, now. He was tossed about then without the power to help himself, but now he's a master o' the ocean, sir."

"Do you remember the name of the ship in which he was wrecked?"

"Yes, sir. It's just as I—"

Here the old man hesitated a moment, as though he might be revealing the fact of their former conversation, but at a motion from his interlocutor, he continued:

"The name o' the ship was burnt, in big, fair letters on the yard 'at the child was lashed to. It was the Ajax."

"That was the ship, was it not, Godfrey?" said Wilton, turning to Mr. Marmaduke.

"It was," replied that gentleman, while a marked agitation gave its tone to his features.

"You told me, I think," continued his lordship, again turning to Paul, "that you had preserved the clothes which the child was dressed in, at the time you found him?"

"Yes, sir—ev'ry rag on 'em. They're in my chest now, just in the next room."

"And did you also preserve the strip of cloth with which the child was lashed to the yard?"

"Yes, sir."

"Mr. Marmaduke, will you have the kindness to touch that bell-rope?" said Lord Wilton to the old gentleman.

"My lord, what does this mean? What is this for?" uttered Maxwell, after old Godfrey had rang the bell, in a trembling, doubting, and half-fearful tone. "I conjure you, sir, to tell me what end you have in view?"

"Rest quietly for a few moments, my dear boy, and you shall know it all. Ask no questions yet."

The young man gazed first at the speaker, and then at Mr. Marmaduke. Upon the features of the former there was a happy, joyous expression, with a slight mixture of kind playfulness, while upon the face of the latter, there dwelt an earnest, absorbing interest, with a searching look fixed full upon his own face.

"Your pleasure, gentlemen," said a servant, at that moment putting his head in at the door.

"Conduct the female, who accompanied us, to this room," said Wilton.

The servant bowed and withdrew, and in a few moments returned and ushered in an old lady, whose form must have sustained the weight of half a century, at least.

"Hector," said Lord Wilton, as the female entered, "you remember the caution I gave you?"

"Yes, sir," replied she, as she cast her eyes about the room.

Wilton was upon the point of speaking when he noticed that Hector's eyes had rested upon Maxwell, but a new idea at that moment entered his mind, and he remained silent.

With an earnest, fixed gaze the woman regarded the young man for full two minutes—then she stepped forward, and, seeming to forget that the young lieutenant was a perfect stranger to her, she placed her hand upon his brow, and laid the nut-brown curls back farther from his face.

A moment more she gazed, while the youth himself trembled with a startling emotion, and then said, in a measured, confident tone:

"Mr. Marmaduke, do you want more evidence than that?"

"I would ask for no more, Hector," the old gentleman replied; "but since it is at hand, let us have it all."

"Lord Wilton, I pray you, sir—" "Stop, stop, my dear boy—this is my business, and you must let me carry it through to suit myself," interrupted Wilton, as Maxwell, all agitated and trembling, attempted to gain an explanation of the strange scene. Then turning to Paul, he continued:

"Now, Paul, bring us that bundle."

Had the old boatswain been ordered to level a gun upon his country's enemy, he could not have moved quicker to obey the order.

"Stop—don't untie it yet," uttered Wilton, as Paul returned with the bundle and began to unloosen the cord that bound it. "Hector, can you describe the kind of dresses which the child had when it left England?"

"Yes, sir, I think I can. But then, you know, it had such a lot of them, sir. There was no less than twenty frocks."

"But at ease, and especially in a storm, the child would have naturally had on its warmest clothing, Hector," intimated Wilton.

"Sure enough it would," returned the woman, and

then clapping her hands in the joyousness of a lucky thought, she continued:

"All the woollen and flannel clothes that my lady had made for the babe I made myself, and I worked, with fine blue silk, the little fellow's first name on every one of them."

"And what was that name?"

"Osmond, sir."

"Just like a signal-book!" shouted old Paul, as he tore open the bundle and exhibited the clothes, which for nineteen years he had kept so faithfully. "I obeyed orders as far as I could, an' for 'other name I give 'im the old-admiral's. There 'tis—see it?"

As the old sailor spoke, he pointed out to Lord Wilton the simple name "Osmond," upon the Scotch frock, and also upon two flannel under-garments.

"An' here's the strip o' cloth as Max was lashed to the yard with," the old sailor continued, as he took out a long strip of cashmere stuff, which was knotted in the middle, and had a silver eye-hook upon one end.

"That was a piece of my lady's dress, I know," exclaimed Hector, as she took the cloth and examined it. "It was one that her—"

"Never mind that, Hector," interrupted Lord Wilton, and then turning to Mr. Marmaduke, he continued:

"Godfrey, mortal man could ask no more, than this."

"Most assuredly not," returned Marmaduke.

"And you are satisfied?" continued Wilton.

"Satisfied? Why, my dear Wilton, I have been satisfied since first I placed my eyes upon the young man's countenance," said the old gentleman. "When he was but a day old his own mother was not more sure of his identity than I am at the present moment."

As Marmaduke closed, Lord Wilton arose from his seat, and taking the young lieutenant by the hand, he said, while the unfeigned joy of his heart was pictured upon his countenance:

"Mr. Maxwell, you must ere this have arrived at a conclusion of what we have in hand. When you were at my hotel in Windsor, your countenance told me that it was not impossible that I might fathom a secret that was hidden to you. St. Moore's account of your early life placed my curiosity upon the *qui rite*, and when I heard from Paul all the particulars of your entrance upon his care, I was sure that I knew your true birth and parentage; and now, my dear boy, I may give to you, without fear of disappointment, the joy of knowing that you are no longer the unknown, ocean-rocked foundling, but that you have a family name in England of which no man need be ashamed."

"And who, who, sir, were my parents?" uttered Maxwell, trembling at every joint beneath the excitement of this astounding relation.

"You must pardon me for the present," Wilton returned; "but not many days shall roll over your head ere you know it all."

"No, no, my lord," urged Maxwell, with his hand still trembling upon Wilton's arm, "do not keep me in suspense. Oh, I may surely know my father's name."

"Maxwell," said his lordship, in an earnest tone, "are you afraid to trust my judgment?"

"Oh, no, sir—but I would—"

"One moment," interrupted Wilton. "I assure you, my young friend, that it is for your own benefit that I postpone this communication, and when all is explained, you will not wonder at it. Mr. Marmaduke has much to do with your affairs, and I have paid you this visit at the present time because he would be assured of your identity ere he moved in other matters that demand his immediate attention. And now, as those matters press upon our time, we must bid you a short adieu. You shall hear from me either to-day or to-morrow."

Maxwell would have spoken, but he knew not what to say. Godfrey Marmaduke grasped him by the hand, and bade him a hearty blessing, but even then he returned no answer, and when the door closed upon the retiring party, he sank back into his chair and gazed into the features of old Paul.

"An' shall we have to part company, Max?" uttered the old man, while his lip trembled, and his eyes glistened with a swelling tear-drop.

"Not on earth, Paul."

"Then, I'm still happy. But if they should take you away from me, Max, I shouldn't care how soon my old timbers were sunk in the ocean. My life would be of no use to me then."

Maxwell grasped old Paul's hand, and for a time he almost forgot the startling intelligence he had just received, in the noble love he possessed in the bosom of Paul Marline.

(To be continued.)

PROVERBS.—They embrace the wide sphere of human existence; they take all the colours of life; they are

often exquisite strokes of genius; they delight by the airy sarcasm of their caustic satire, the luxuriance of their humour, the playfulness of their imagery, and the tenderness of their sentiment. They give a deep insight into domestic life, and open for us the heart of man, in all the various states which he may occupy. A frequent review of proverbs should enter into our readings; and, although they are no longer the ornaments of conversation, they have not ceased to be the treasure of thought.

SCIENCE.

THE solid content of the moon, as compared with that of the earth, is as 1 to 19. The surfaces are as 1 to 18.

An alloy of eighty parts of zinc, ten parts of copper, and ten parts of iron is said to possess valuable properties, and not to rust in moist air.

MAGIC PHOTOGRAPHY.

SUCH is the designation of the latest novelty in our art-science—a designation which we borrow from a sensational advertisement in one of the daily papers.

Its nature may thus be stated:—Two sheets of paper are supplied to the purchaser, together with instructions. One of these sheets is albumenized, the other is a sheet of blotting-paper. There is no picture visible on the albumenized paper; but when, in accordance with the instructions given, the sheet of blotting-paper is moistened by means of a few drops of water, and pressed in contact with the face of the albumenized paper, a picture immediately springs into existence.

The question now arises—how is this accomplished? Light has evidently nothing to do with it, seeing that the same phenomenon occurs both in sunshine and in comparative darkness.

The following is the method by which the "magic photographs" are produced:—Print a picture on albumenized paper in the usual way, taking care not to print so deeply as ordinarily. Fix the print (without toning) in plain hyposulphite of soda, wash thoroughly, and then immerse it in a saturated solution of bichloride of mercury till the image disappears. Again wash thoroughly and dry. The paper now appears like a piece of plain albumenized paper, without any appearance of a picture on it, and in this condition it may be kept for an indefinite time.

To cause the image to appear instantaneously, and in more than its pristine vigour, dip the paper in a weak solution of hyposulphite of soda; or, preferably, dip a piece of white blotting-paper in a solution of hyposulphite of soda and dry it.

This prepared paper may be kept in contact with the latent picture so long as moisture is excluded.

When it is required to develop the image, moisten the blotting-paper with common water and press it against the albumenized surface of the print, when, presto! the "magic photograph" is produced, and is, when well washed, as permanent as many of the photographs of the present day. The image, by being again immersed in the bichloride of mercury solution, may be once more rendered invisible, and by the hyposulphite solution again restored as often as may be desired.

Although we believe that this process of magic photography has been patented a few weeks since, every intelligent photographer who has made himself acquainted with the past history of our art-science, knows that many years have elapsed since this "magic" process was first practised. The amusement that can thus be introduced into the social circle by the "magic photographs" may be easily conceived.

SEA-WATER has a curious action on cast iron, converting it into a grey porous mass that grows rapidly hot in contact with air. Some cannons fished up near Scotland became so hot that they could not be touched.

THE EXHAUSTION OF OUR COAL BEDS.—The *Times* says, with much brilliant power of language, "In three generations, that is, in the days of our children's children, we are told that all the coal of these islands that lies within 4,000 ft. of the surface will be exhausted, if we go on increasing our consumption at the present rate. Coal is everything to us. Without coal our factories will become idle, our foundries and workshops be still as the grave; the locomotive will rust in the shed, and the rail be buried in weeds. Our streets will be dark, our houses uninhabitable. Our rivers will forget the paddle-wheel, and we shall again be separated by days from France, by months from the United States. The post will lengthen its periods and protract its dates. A thousand special arts and manufactures, one by one, then in a crowd, will fly the empty soil, as bono companions are said to disappear when the cask is dry. We shall miss our grand dependence, as a man misses his companion, his fortune, or a limb, every hour and at every turn reminded of the irreparable loss. Wise England!

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will then be the silly virgin without oil in her lamp. We shall be surrounded and overwhelmed by the unprofitable lumber of buildings and machinery that we cannot use, and even cities we cannot occupy. For who will care to live in Manchester? Who will be able to live in the metropolis? It is not so difficult to imagine the state we shall return to, for it takes only a middle-aged man to remember it." But we think that, by that time, we shall have discovered a means of "bottling up," so to speak, the ceaseless and endless power of the tides and the waves, and even now means could be suggested for the purpose.

THE MACKAY GUN—FURTHER EXPERIMENTS.

On the 23rd, 24th, and 25th of April Mr. James Mackay, of Liverpool, conducted some farther experiments with his 12-pounder windage adaptation guns. They were on a more elaborate scale than any at the Crosby Range since the spring of 1894, and were intended to show the range, accuracy, and ricochet capabilities of the weapon. The presence of a member of the Select Ordnance Committee, and also of Captain Pigeard, Imperial naval attaché to the French Embassy, also gave special importance to the proceedings.

The firing was conducted by a lieutenant and a detachment of the Royal Artillery from the North Fort, at Liverpool. On the first day the experiments were for range at 10 deg. and 15 deg. elevation. At 10 deg. the mean range was 3,600 yards, and at 15 deg. 5,570 yards. On the second day some excellent practice was made with a cast-iron gun at a 9 ft. target, placed 1,500 yards distant. Ten test shots were fired, and although half a gale blew across the line of fire, two of the last three shots scored centre, while the average deviation did not exceed two or three yards. The elevation was excellent.

For a short time on the first day, and again on Wednesday morning, some experiments were made with a view to test the ricochet of the shot, which is declared to be for actual warfare, and especially for field and siege service, one of the best features of the Mackay weapon. In the first instance the bolts, of full weight, were fired with only two ounces of powder. They were seen to keep perfectly straight line for nearly their whole distance, fully 800 yards. Firing at the 500 yards' target, making the shot graze in front, and their ricochet through it was proceeded with on Wednesday, with equal success.

It is a well-known property of all rifled guns that their shot, when made to ricochet, deviate rapidly to the right, and the result is that usually they do no farther damage after the first graze. Smooth-bore, on the contrary, send their shot straight in ricochet, doing damage in their whole course; and this is the property claimed for the Mackay gun, with, of course, immensely increased range.

It is said, by those who profess to know, that these properties will make this small gun unrivalled for field service. The officer in charge of the firing declared that had the day been calm he could have struck the 1,500 yards' target at each shot, and the artillerymen also spoke particularly of the guns being so cleanly, consequent on the smoke being consumed. Mr. Mackay has ordered some new guns, and the experiments will shortly be resumed.

THE CHINESE mend holes in cast-iron vessels as follows:—They melt a small quantity of iron in a crucible the size of a thimble, and pour the molten metal on a piece of felt covered with wood ashes. This is pressed inside the vessel against the hole, and as it exudes on the other side it is struck by a small roll of felt covered with ashes. The new iron then adheres to the old.

M. ARAGO, in measuring the difference in the velocity of light while passing through air and through water, wished to give a revolving mirror a velocity of 8,000 rotations per second. This he was unable to do; with the most delicate and perfect arrangement of cog-wheels he was able to impart only 1,000 revolutions per second to his mirror. M. Foucault, by substituting for cog-wheels a delicate turbine acted on by a steam-jet, raised the velocity to 1,500 turns per second. M. Arago, by removing the mirror and turning the spindle alone, achieved, it is said, a velocity, even by means of cog-wheels, of 8,000 turns per second—equal to 480,000 turns per minute.

GEMS.—The artificial production of gems is a subject of much interest. A new method of making rubies has been discovered. A mixture of fluoride of aluminium with a little fluoride of chromium is placed in a Hessian crucible lined with calcined alumina. In the midst of the mixture of fluorides is placed a small platinum crucible containing boric acid. The outer crucible is well covered, and the whole exposed to a temperature sufficiently high to volatilize both the boric acid and the fluorides. The vapour of the acid decomposes that of the fluorides, fluoride of boron is formed, and crystals of the mixed oxides of aluminium and chromium are deposited. If the mix-

ture of the fluorides be made in the right proportions, these crystals will have exactly the same composition, specific colour, lustre, and other properties as the most perfect natural rubies.

A VERY rich oil well has just been discovered in the district of Natuchaitz, on the shore of the Caspian Sea. After boring a depth of 120 ft. in the solid rock a stream of oil made its appearance and flowed for twenty minutes. A deafening noise followed, accompanied by a slight earthquake, which so frightened the workmen that they all fled. When the noise had subsided a jet of clear water, tasting very salt, sprang up with great violence. After this jet had exhausted itself (which it took twenty-six minutes in doing), a quantity of froth, smoke, and stones issued out of the cavity, which was now found to contain nothing but pure oil. Since then from 1,500 to 2,000 pallfuls of the oil have been drawn out, the only instrument used being a common wooden syphon 2 in. in diameter.

THE GERANIUM WREATH.

CHAPTER I.

RING, ring, at the front door bell, and that was an unusual occurrence of an evening, I assure you, for Bessie and her father lived a life so secluded that, except for an occasional call from some old schoolmate, their front door was seldom opened.

So Kathie quite in a flutter pulled off her apron, ran for a match to light the little hall lamp, and then opened the door.

A moment after she brought a card upstairs, saying that the gentleman waited in the parlour.

"Edward Cleveland!"

Bessie's cheeks burned with sudden excitement, for he had come to visit her, he, the courted, the admired, the reserved, the impenetrable? She had met him at Nellie Lyon's house a fortnight before.

Nellie had sent for her to come over and play backgammon because she was so lonely, and in the midst of a game Mr. Cleveland came in with some message from his sister.

He stayed a little while conversing very pleasantly, and when Bessie rose to leave he rose too, and accompanied her to her home. She had felt a little pang of regret when he said good-by, thinking how unlikely she was to ever know him better in her quiet mode of life.

But the regret was not very deep, because the interest could not be; still there was just enough of the latter to send the hot crimson into her cheek, and a trembling into her voice, as she went into the parlour and said:

"Good evening, Mr. Cleveland."

That was a pleasant evening, her visitor was so truly polite, so finely educated, so full of bright thoughts and choice bits of knowledge.

She liked to listen to him, but he would not let her do that very much, he led her on to talk of herself.

She felt that he was trying to draw her out, but she did not object to that, for she had a sort of instinct that she might appear to better advantage than if left to her own awkward modes of self-expression.

And there was no artfulness in that instinct, she only felt that he knew best how to harmonize her untutored thoughts, so she trusted him.

He was one who had travelled a great deal, and had almost everywhere met with thrilling adventures, hair-breadth escapes, and curious *rencontres*; and he never missed any point of interest where he journeyed.

He would have been "Eyes" twenty times over in the old story of "Eyes and no Eyes."

So he made Bessie's own two brown orbs open wide with wonder at his marvellous stories; and then by-and-by, *apropos* of some anecdote, making a skilful turn off into a disquisition upon character, he led Bessie on to give opinions of her own, and finally to maintain a spirited argument with him.

Then they talked of books, and fortunate it was that Bessie had improved her quiet life in the improvement of her mind, for her visitor felt a great respect and admiration for the "quaint little girl study," as he had mentally termed her.

Bessie appreciated great thoughts, and had some acquaintance with great books, as her new friend very soon found.

So the conversation went on, and Mr. Cleveland stayed much longer than he meant, but not so long as he wished; and when he left, it was with the promise of another call very soon, to bring an exquisitely illustrated little volume of poems for Bessie to see.

And he did come, again and again. He was very much interested in Bessie, and she with every interview became more interested in him.

He had seen enough of people to become somewhat weary of the common varieties; and that was why he was often termed "proud and disagreeable, in spite of his good looks and good manners."

He had met many fair ladies in his life, but either they were not fair for him, and he cared not for their fairness, or else, on better knowing them, there was some little blemish of soul somewhere that stole his heart.

Still the man had dreams, as what man, however proud, or magnificent, or reserved, has not? And there was great wealth of tenderness locked deep in his heart, which he fully expected some little hand with a magic key in it would reach some day.

Meanwhile he was waiting. Bessie was waiting too, but much more vaguely than he; she had not even reached so far in her experience as to have been disappointed, as to have found one idol.

A man-idol, I mean, of course. The hero of her fancies had been very dimly distant, but now suddenly a distinct prominent figure came right into her dreams—the figure of Edward Cleveland.

A crisis had come to Bessie. If a girl is to be loved, she may sit all her days in the chimney-corner knitting, but sooner or later the lover will come marching into that chimney-corner after her.

And if a girl is not to be loved, all the fine dresses, and balls, and watering-places, will never bring a lover an inch nearer.

Bessie's quiet life had been like a chimney-corner to her, but it cannot quite yet be told whether the lover had come.

Mr. Cleveland was very much interested; still he had been so many times before—he might be so many times again.

Mr. Cleveland had come to no decision in his manly mind.

Meanwhile he liked to watch the bright face, the honest eyes, the sweet mouth; he liked to hear the glowing, enthusiastic thoughts, knowing that none but he could win them to full utterance.

And this feeling led him to talk more freely of himself, no longer in a brilliant narrative style, but to really confide many of his dearest theories and aims, pet fancies and prejudices, to the sympathizing Bessie.

And it was in speaking of pet prejudices that he told her one evening that a chilling malign effect the odour of the rose-geranium-leaf possessed for him.

"I am too sensitive to outer influences," he said, "I have seen it wreathed so often about the coffins of my dearest dead, that its odour has become for ever associated with the horror of tomb and charnel-house. A geranium-leaf has power to dash the charm from the happiest moment."

"Ah! *Chérie*, have I found you?" interrupted a gay, loud voice, and a brilliant flashing presence swept suddenly between them. It was Elise Varian, as Bessie recognized in her bewilderment. Elise Varian, a distant cousin of hers, who had come it seemed to visit an old school-friend in the village, and now hunted Bessie out as soon as she could. So Bessie greeted her, and made her acquainted with Mr. Cleveland. Elise was showy, Elise was captivating; Elise carried, as she sometimes expressed it to her *confidante*, "threescore male hearts all on a string," and with her the latest was best. She had heard of Mr. Cleveland before, had made certain little plans concerning him, and was delighted at this early meeting.

"What spirit in my feet," she asked, saucily, "brought me here on this night of all nights in the year? My good genius must have known I should meet the renowned Mr. Cleveland!"

"Good or bad? *Qu'en savez-vous*?" said Mr. Cleveland, quizzically.

"Ah, can you question?" she asked, with a melting glance.

"Pardon! I will not question so fair a lady," and his tone was mockingly humble.

"Then you believe in chivalry?" she asked.

"Who could help it here?" and his dark eyes shone full on hers. And so their badinage went on, almost ignoring Bessie, who could not talk at all in such a style. She hardly liked to hear it either, her great friend Edward did not seem so great in the light of an incipient flirtation.

It was hardly a flirtation, however; it was only that Edward Cleveland was a man, and amused himself, when he saw bewitching eyes too ready to answer to his.

And he considered such amusement as merely a surface-thing, not at all a treason to whomever his heart was hoarding treasures for. Ah, well! Men judge differently from women.

"Your cousin is a very brilliant girl," he said to Bessie, when Elise was gone; and Bessie said "yes," but could not have told why she said no more.

Next day Bessie met Mr. Cleveland waiting on the street with Elise Varian; a few days after she saw them driving together.

Now, Mr. Cleveland had never invited Bessie to drive with him. But his kind, friendly calls at her house continued frequent as ever, and the little pique

she felt against Elise made her prize them even more. Such is one phase of human nature.

It was at this time that Nellie Lyon issued invitations for a little party, and included Bessie and Elise among the rest.

The utmost latitude in dress was to be allowed; that is, people might dress "in character" if they chose, if not, not. Elise came over to consult with Bessie.

"You demure folks always have heaps of ideas, if one can only get at them," she said; "now tell me what I shall be! Cleopatra, Queen of Sheba, Jessica, or what?"

"Jessica would be very pretty."

"But, oh, how splendidly Cleopatra could dress, and I would make Ned Cleveland be Antony! Then he would have to be devoted to me all the evening!"

"Would he?" asked Bessie, simply.

"Of course he would. I mean he shall be though, whatever I am. What part shall you take, Bessie?"

"Simply Bessie McLean."

"What is the dress for that character?"

"I shall wear white, and white flowers in my hair."

"And that will be lovely!" exclaimed Elise, ecstatically. "You are right, what is simplest will be really most elegant. My tastes are too glaring. I will give up Cleopatra, but yet I want something characteristic, something a little brilliant, something that will enslave the fastidious Cleveland. Advise me, Bessie!"

"I really do not know what will suit you, Elise."

"I have it! I will wear green—it becomes my complexion best, as the milkmaid said. I will be some character that belongs to green, a nymph, or a Bl Vernon, or something! What is it that dresses in green?"

"A wood-nymph would do," said Bessie.

"I begin to see daylight! And what shall I wear in my hair?"

A strange, malicious thought born of jealousy darted into Bessie's brain. For what else could have made her suggest a wreath of geranium-leaves?

Bessie was every day getting flashes and intuitions of life such as had never visited her before. She felt at that moment a sort of wild, helpless hatred of Elise, and yet what right had she to feel it?

Nevertheless, with the quick feminine instinct of self-control, her eyes were smiling, her voice assured, as she said:

"Would geranium-leaves be pretty? I will make a beautiful wreath for you."

"Thank you! That will do splendidly! I'll call on my way there, and take it. Then it will be perfectly fresh."

O Bessie, Bessie! You know oak-leaves would have been much more appropriate for a wood-nymph, but I don't believe a girl in the world will censure you for your poor little stratagem to break the spell of the sorceress over Edward Cleveland.

CHAPTER II.

THE evening came. Elise called for Bessie, and took the wreath of geranium-leaves under her scarlet cloak.

The wreath was thick and heavy; Bessie had toiled all the afternoon upon the fragrant thing, and when it was done, she bathed her hands in a dozen waters, that the least taint of the odour unwelcome to one might not remain there.

In the dressing-room, it took Bessie but a moment to shake out the folds of her dress, and adjust the white flowers in her hair; then with a backward glance at her cousin, she went down the stairs to the parlour below.

Elise was harder to please; she shrugged her gleaming white shoulders, and calculated to a nicety the contrasting effect of her leaf-green tissue. She looped a scarf about her with a pin of emeralds, and emerald rings hung in her ears.

And then with an admiring glance she lifted the geranium-wreath to its place among her jetty curls, and here and there trained a little ringlet to run over it like a vine-tendrill.

The restless sparkle in her eyes, the crimson of her cheek, the deeper crimson of her lip, were all there to help her to be the wilful, bewitching queen of hearts. Because it is oftentimes for such things that men elect their queens.

And when she went down into the parlour, a little buzz of admiration greeted her, and she had willing subjects enough in a minute about her; while Annie Wilton, a ten times better girl, had none at all in her quiet corner—and Louise Lambert, a ten times sweeter girl, seemed quite contented with just her own brother.

But Bessie, who could not help being very watchful, noticed that Elise did not seem wholly absorbed in any word or deed, till Edward Cleveland joined the circle.

He noticed it, too, and, as he always could if he willed, soon managed to monopolize the conversation without seeming to do so, and one by one the others dropped away discomfited, leaving Elise just where she wished to be, *à-la-lite* with him.

She laughed and chatted, she swayed her graceful head, scattering fragrance on the air with every motion.

Would the charm of the geranium-leaves work? Bessie's heart beat anxiously, yet it was a silly little thing to give a thought to!

Yet perhaps it did work for, as she watched, she saw a slight weariness creep into Edward's face, a dull sad look into his eyes, and his tones became less animated.

Elise grew yet more brilliant, her dark eyes burned luminously upon him, her wreathed head bent nearer, and with a little gesture of distaste he closed the conversation and left her side.

"Good evening, Bessie," he said in a moment more, approaching our heroine of the fluttering heart; and she, with no atom of malice or pride left in her foolish little head, showed plainly by the telltale pink and the pleased voice how glad she was to see him. And now to keep him! for she saw that Elise watched them both, and unknown dangers were in such espionage.

So Bessie laughed and talked after her own eager, innocent fashion, and the dull sad look and the weariness went quite away from Edward Cleveland's face and eyes.

She thought there was never a pleasanter evening—and he? I will not say what he thought, as he looked down into the bright young face so unadvisedly full of interest in him.

"Come, come! No more *à-la-lites*!" rang out Nellie Lyon's clear voice, as she flew about the room rousing people up for a gay quadrille; and in a few moments Mr. Cleveland was standing up with Louise Lambert, and Hal Lambert with Bessie—a tall, handsome officer with Elise, and as many more couples as Nellie Lyon pleased.

Annie Wilton, however, did not dance; she thought it was wrong—so she remained a very pretty and very contented wall-flower, talking with some other flowers of the same kind who flattered her, and with one or two young boys who seemed rather astray in the company.

I believe the handsome officer, Captain Melville, was the only gentleman who talked to her ten minutes during the evening.

"May I dance with you the next set?" Edward asked Bessie, as they met in the figure. She nodded and smiled, but Elise who heard it, too, did not smile.

"How heavy my wreath is!" she exclaimed, the next moment.

"It is too beautiful to be complained of," said Captain Melville, gallantly. "Allow me to relieve you of a part of it."

And with dexterous touch he covered a rich cluster of the fragrant leaves, and shrined them in a buttonhole.

The beauty was propitiated for a season, but the gloom came back into her eyes when, as dance after dance came on, she received no invitation from Edward Cleveland.

He danced with Bessie, and then again with Louise Lambert.

Louise was a perfect little pearl of a maiden, and, moreover, Bessie's dearest friend.

She always knew just what to do and say, and always did and said it in the gracefulst way—a talent which made Bessie add wonder to her love, for Bessie herself did not always appear to advantage. She made mistakes sometimes.

Her life had been too quiet to teach many lessons to her impulsive heart, but she was earnest and single-hearted, and that covers a multitude of sins.

Louise knew by a subtle instinct that a grand character lay dormant there; so she added wonder to her love too, and the girls were sworn friends.

"Come, walk with me a little while, Bessie," said merry Hal Lambert; "your cavalier is talking to Louise, and we'll have time to criticize all the dresses before they want us."

Bessie smiled and took his arm, but the smile was partly because of the unwonted pleasure of hearing Edward Cleveland called her cavalier.

They walked up and down the room, looking for all the characteristic costumes, but most of the girls had preferred prettiness to oddity, so there was nothing more striking than a few ladies in antique dresses with ruffs and stomachers, one little creature in Quaker apparel, the inevitable flower-girl, a jaunty sailor costume, and one brigand.

"How handsome your cousin Elise looks to-night," Hal said; "her green isn't willow green, I'll be bound!"

"She's a wood-nymph," Bessie stated, briefly.

"She's a right jolly girl when she's good-natured,"

said he, irreverently; "you must enjoy her company very much!"

How easily third parties would decide things for us sometimes! But Bessie did not seem to mind.

"I'm a little afraid of her to-night, though," continued Hal; "there's something offish in her eye when she looks over this way. Where's the captain who has been haunting her? Oh, I see, he is talking to Annie Wilton."

Ay, and in Annie Wilton's slender hand lay the rich cluster of geranium-leaves that Elise had so generously allowed to be taken from her coronal. And the fragrance of geranium was from that night all her life, though very dear to Annie. So one's love becomes another's blessing.

Another dance was called, and again Elise sent her dark eyes wandering after Edward Cleveland, but he led Nellie Lyon away for a partner, and Captain Melville, who stood next in her good graces, secured Bessie instead of her.

However, she had a dozen left to choose from, and some of the girls thought her much to be envied, and so she was, perhaps, by those whose savvy runs in that direction.

But it is one thing to have just the one you want, and another to have a dozen that you don't.

It may be that there is a Nemesis in love; Elise had made some true hearts ache, before she learned what it was to be thwarted herself.

By-and-by, passing Edward, she dropped a geranium leaf at his feet, quite by chance!

"If he knows anything, he will take it up and come over to me," she thought, pausing as she reached a flower stand in the window.

Edward did not see the leaf at once. When he did see it, he did not recognize it as belonging to Elise, but mechanically setting his heel upon it he trod it down and crushed its life out, while he went on chatting pleasantly with Nellie Lyon.

He secured the privilege of escorting Bessie home, before the party broke up. Elise heard that, just as she generally managed to hear things, and when the girls all gathered in the dressing-room again, it was she who, brilliant and glowing, left at first, and as she passed out threw a baleful glance over her shoulder at Bessie, who stood tying her white hood.

And as with Hal Lambert she went by the group of gentlemen in the hall, she whispered tragically in Mr. Cleveland's ear, "*Ed to Elise!*"

"No, I have not *été* *tu*!" he answered, saucily and aloud; "and such pretty lips should not call such ugly names!"

Elise swept regnantly out of the door, and in a few minutes Bessie came slyly down, quite happy, but a little conscience-stricken about the geranium-leaves.

CHAPTER III.

THE days grew eventful for Bessie; she began to acknowledge to her own heart that a victor had come, and her life was disfigured.

Every word and look became fraught with sweet new meanings, and unwisely she let herself dream on, not knowing that it was unwisely. But Edward Cleveland, kind and attentive as ever, had never yet said, "I love you, Bessie!"

One day, Louise Lambert brought over her sewing, to spend a long afternoon with Bessie, and the two girls went up into the sunny, airy chamber which was the delight of Bessie's heart.

Her room was her castle, she said, and very few were allowed to enter there. Louise was one of the few.

Her books, her treasures, the little indications of her unique earnest spirit, were all there, and a keen eye could find some revelation in everything.

Louise took a little low chair by the window, and drew out a dainty bit of embroidery which was a never-ceasing mystery to Bessie, who could accomplish wonders in the way of plain sewing, but never touched a bit of floss silk.

"Ah, Louise!" she exclaimed, "let's take turns. I'll read to you while you work, and then you can read to me. That is my idea of perfect friendship."

"With all my heart," said Louise, who was also a devotee to perfect friendship. "You must read first though, Bessie, for I am so nicely at work already."

"Very well."

So Bessie chose a book with a story of "Life in the Iron Mills" in it, and began to read.

She was deeply interested in the narrative, and her voice grew full of intensity and feeling as she went on.

The hero who suffered seemed to live again in that voice as the sad pathetic words of the story floated on the air. Louise looked up startled.

"How can you read it so, Bessie?" she asked. "It makes me shiver to hear you. It almost seems as if you must have suffered terribly yourself."

"I believe I could suffer," said Bessie, only half lightly, "but the reading is just like any amateur

actress. And now, Louise, you must take your turn."

"Very well," said Louise, "I see what book I shall take." And she glanced at a blue and gold volume on the table.

"Only I am not going to sew in the meantime," said Bessie. "I shall lie here on my great buffalo-robe, and see pictures of what you read."

"Your buffalo-robe," exclaimed Louise. "What do you mean, you queerest of Bessies?"

"Why, it is one my Californian uncle sent to father. See what a great magnificent black thing it is: my father gave it to me. I'll tell you what I wanted it for, Lou. I read a story once about a lady, and when some one broke her heart, she hid herself away in her room, and there she took opium and lay upon a couch of leopard-skins in a bitter sleep, and no one saw her for three weeks. Then she came out of her room and went into the world again, a cold stately woman like marble: people almost worshipped her, but she never looked to right or left, she lived a lone proud life to the last. And I feel as if I could be just like that lady," Bessie went on, her cheeks fairly a-flame with excitement. "I like to press my cheek against this long black fur, that was once the covering of a wild, fierce animal. It seems as if a breath came from the forests and jungles, making me feel free and strong!"

"Why, Bessie, I never heard so odd a thing!" exclaimed Louise.

"It is an odd thing, isn't it?" said Bessie, laughing good-naturedly, at herself, as the momentary excitement passed away.

Then making a great luxurious heap of the buffalo-skin in a corner, she threw herself down upon it and clasped her hands over her eyes, while Louise opened the volume and chose an idyl.

"I am going to read 'Elaine' to you," she said; "it is so lovely one can never tire of it. Mr. Cleveland read it all aloud to me the other evening at our house, and such a soft light came into those dark eyes of his as he looked up at me and said, 'I know an Elaine—can you guess who she is?' It fairly took my breath away to hear him speak so!"

Then Louise, with her sweet, even voice, began to read:

"Elaine the fair, Elaine the lovable,
Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,"

while Bessie lay still with her hands clasped over her eyes. How quiet sometimes hearts are when blows fall heaviest!

Poor little Bessie felt just then as if she never wanted to look up at the sunshine again; she did not stop to reason, it seemed to her perfectly clear that Edward Cleveland loved Louise. Indeed, how could he help it?

She did not feel angry, she did not feel jealous; she only felt helpless, hopeless, and utterly miserable.

It was so different from the little affair with Elaine; she had not scrupled to try all her little arts against her, the first! but no thought of resistance entered her mind with respect to Louise.

It seemed so clear to her—how else should he spend an evening there, and read "Elaine," and ask that question?

Poor Bessie! she had dreamed that maybe some time he would care for her, and the quick sob rose in her throat at the thought; but she stilled them, and Louise, all unconscious, read on sweetly and clearly the story of "Elaine," and how truly and all in vain she loved Sir Lancelot.

But Bessie only heard the voice, and not the words, till at last these sad lines came softly in like tears,

"Sweet is true love, though given in vain, in vain,
And sweet is death that puts an end to pain;
I know not which is sweeter—no, not I!"

Bessie was impulsive, and she had the element of self-sacrifice in her character. The first bitterness passed away as she lay there motionless, and feeling very much like Elaine or some unloved heroine. She made up her mind to go on quietly, just as if her heart were not broken, and to smile and be cheerful as ever when the day came that Louise would tell her how Edward wooed and won.

"I will always love him just the same! but they never shall know it!" she said to herself, heroically, dashing away two little tears which would come pushing their way out as if they wanted to betray her.

"There! isn't that beautiful!" exclaimed Louise, laying down the book when the poem was done. And Bessie, with an odd, loving little gesture, came up and kissed her, saying "yes" with a steady voice.

Louise went on with the rare bit of snowy needle-work, and Bessie busied herself in winding floss for it, an occupation which she heartily disliked, but undertook as a sort of penance, though what imaginable sin she supposed she ought to do penance for, I cannot tell.

After tea, the girls went out into the little garden and leaned against the fence, where the sweetbriar

grew, so that the vision presented to Edward Cleveland, who suddenly turned the corner, was as of two angels looking over a rosy cloud.

He unhesitatingly invited the two angels to go down the river with him in his boat, which lay at a little wharf close by. So they ran in for hats and shawls, and in a moment they were going towards the water.

How little people know of each other. Each of these three had a perfect whirl of emotion in the heart unsuspected by the rest—and they all walked calmly along and talked of the weather.

Once on the river, what a sail they had! They floated hither and thither where the waves willed, only now and then Mr. Cleveland asserted his authority by a few car strokes.

Louise sat just before him with the moonlight full in her face, looking quite in a halo, and she made a great many bright little speeches which showed a happy heart. Bessie crouched in the bows, resting her head on a coil of rope, and trailing her hand over the boat's side, letting bits of seaweed tangle about her fingers.

A forlorn little figure she was, but Louise, with her back turned, did not notice the forlornness, and Edward Cleveland, who was as merry as a boy just out of school, made no remarks, though he often looked that way.

"What are you thinking about, Bessie, that keeps you so still?" Louise asked at last, without turning her moonlit face.

Poor Bessie, whose mind was never at a loss for a smile, was at that moment thinking how much she felt like Undine in the German story, when she goes sailing on the sea, and Hildebrand loves Bertalda best. That would hardly do to tell, however, so she only said:

"I was thinking about the river-fairies."

"What's that?" exclaimed Edward Cleveland, all of a sudden, gazing intently over the side of the boat.

He had been busying himself about something in an underhand manner for two or three minutes, but now looked laughingly up.

"There, catch it! it's right by your hand, Bessie, don't you see it glimmering? The water-mixes have sent you a token because you believe in them!"

And indeed there was a shining thing on the water, coming within an inch of Bessie's dripping hand. She reached and drew it in.

It was a beautiful little bracelet of amber quaintly wrought, and light as foam, with a golden clasp on which was traced the name "Bessie."

A long piece of ribbon-wood was twisted through and through it, which Bessie tore off and let fall while she looked at her wail.

"Why! my name is on it!" she exclaimed, excitedly.

"Certainly," answered Mr. Cleveland, with great gravity. "I told you the fairies brought it to you!"

"But it is not really mine!"

"I don't know about that. It certainly is, if nobody else claims it; the waves brought it and you took it!"

Bessie turned it over with admiring wonder, she had longed so for a tiny bit of amber because of the charm in it, and here was a whole string of amulets. Edward and Louise exchanged comical glances.

But the moonlight was growing cold as well as pale, and the next time they drifted along shore, Edward Cleveland put out an ear and brought the boat to land. And as he helped the girls to spring over on the land, he sang idly:

"Oh, which were best, to roam or rest,
The land's lap or the water's breast,
To sleep on yellow millet sheaves—"

or "lily-leaves," which is it?" he said, forgetting his quotation, as he rejoined Bessie and Louise.

They turned first into the road which led to Bessie's home, and bidding them a hasty farewell at the gate, she ran into the house.

That had decided it; he went home with Louise last! For girls have a queer little code of their own, that if a gentleman escorts two ladies home, the one he takes last is the favourite, because he secures a few moments alone with her in that way!

And there may be wisdom in the code, but tonight it certainly kept Bessie awake with an aching heart.

But she was a brave little maiden for all that, and determined not to cast a single shade in the way of her two friends' happiness. Brave little Bessie! she did not know how soon all her own shadows would be scattered.

CHAPTER IV.

But next morning Bessie's temporary bravery was quite gone, and she did not feel like a heroine at all.

The world seemed very desolate, and she the most

insignificant little atom in it, yet with a heart to suffer.

She wandered about the house, she opened the leaves of Elaine, and finally she thought she would go out for a brisk walk, and maybe that would reconcile life and her.

Certainly, as a general thing, there is no better medicine. The pure air, the green foliage of trees, the lofty sky, and all the alight harmonious sounds of nature, give great rest and strength to the mind.

So Bessie went walking, taking a circuit of the village, standing a little while by the river, and then turning her steps towards the poorer part of the town.

For she had often read in good books how unhappy and discontented people were set quite right again by visiting some home of poverty, or of suffering worse than theirs. So Bessie thought she would try it too.

Some little ragged children were sitting in the middle of the road painting each other's faces mud colour. They stared curiously at her as she came near, and she, with a sudden instinct of pity for the little fellows, unkempt and ill-bred through no fault of theirs, gave each a penny and a kind word, which set their little hearts afloat for that day.

Her steps grew slower as she passed a little house where she knew a poor invalid cripple lived and suffered. She did not dare to go in, not knowing the girl, but she thought she would stand outside a moment, and try to impress it on herself how much trouble there was in the world.

Through the open window stole out the low clear voice of some one reading aloud in the sick room. She knew the voice, knew that it was Annie Wilton doing one of her kind deeds. She listened while the sweet hymn was read:

"Nearer my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee,
Even though it be a cross that raiseth me."

Bessie turned away then: life and she were momentarily reconciled, since it presented itself as discipline simply, and trial, all to win heaven at last.

And so her quick imagination went to planning again, she would be like Annie Wilton, not care at all for love and romance, but just try to be good and make others happy.

She would go to the benevolent societies, she would read to the sick, find employment for the poor, and she would make her father's home brighter.

She thought at that moment, with a little smiting of conscience, how worn and shabby the slippers on his dear feet were, and how it would please him to have her work a beautiful new pair.

"I can find duties enough to keep me very busy for a long time, and then after that, perhaps, I had better be a nun and renounce the world. But that would not do."

So thinking, she reached the main street again, and was walking quietly down it, when whom should she meet but Elise Varian, and Elise stopped her, and insisted on kissing her then and there.

"Well, my demure cousin, are you going to be bridesmaid?" she asked.

"For whom?" asked Bessie.

"Oh, don't pretend you don't know what everybody is talking about! Why, when Mr. Cleveland marries Louise, of course. Didn't you know they are engaged?"

"No," said Bessie. "I did not know it, though I suspected it."

"Ah! did you!" said Elise, with a malicious gleam in her eyes. "Then you and I had better shake hands over it, since we couldn't either of us get him! I saw how it would be, that evening at Nellie Lyon's, when I wore the geranium wreath."

So having done all she wanted to just then, in the way of wounding Bessie's feelings, she kissed her again, and continued her promenade.

Bessie walked on, trying to collect her scattered thoughts about duty and a life of renunciation, when suddenly a window opened, and a little head with fluttering curls was thrust out, and Bessie stopped a moment at Nellie Lyon's eager call.

"Oh, Bessie, Captain Melville just went by with another officer, the most beautiful one you ever saw. I guess he was a major or a colonel. Do you suppose he will bring him to call on us girls? And did you know Edward Cleveland and Louise Lambert are engaged? They are, at least I think so, for I saw them coming together out of her house just now, and they looked perfectly devoted. Come in, Bessie—what, must you go? Well, good-by!" And the curly head withdrew behind the curtain.

Poor Bessie! it was quite too much. Her new resolutions of a free, independent, good life seemed to lose all their consolation; and like a very impulsive and miserable little human being indeed, she hurried home, ran up to her own room, locked her door, and threw herself down upon the buffalo-skin in a passion of sobs and tears.

Undignified, simple Bessie!

But then, I dare say the people who seem proudest, and most self-controlled, are just as undignified, and shed just as many tears in utter agony of heart sometimes, only the doors are locked, and no one sees.

Ring, ring, at the front door bell! And in a moment Kathie came up stairs and announced through the key-hole that Mr. Cleveland was in the parlour.

Bessie sprang up, and surveyed with dismay her tear-stained face in the mirror.

"Run down, Kathie, and tell him I will come in a few minutes; and, Kathie, draw the curtains close, so that the sun will not shine in and fade the carpet."

Then she tried to brighten up her sad little face with smiles, and she thought she would go down as if she never had a care in the world.

Perhaps he had come to tell her of his engagement, and she must be ready to congratulate him, and say something very pleasant.

So at last she gathered up courage enough to face not the foe but the friend, and went down the stairs winging.

The parlour looked quite dark as she went in, and that encouraged her; but Edward Cleveland, whose eyes had become quite used to the dim light, saw at once that it was not a singing face that approached.

He detected the sad drooping of the figure, the mute patience of the face through its mask of cheerfulness, and with a sudden impulse of tenderness he drew her close to his side.

"What is the matter, Bessie?"

"Oh, nothing! Isn't it a lovely day?"

"What is the matter, Bessie?"

For all answer she began to tremble.

"Bessie, darling, I came this morning to tell you my secret, if you will let me."

"I know it," she said, hurriedly—"you love Louise."

"No, I don't," he answered, in utter amazement, "I love you: will you let me always love you?"

Did she hear aright? She looked up into his eyes, and their glance was tender and true. Edward Cleveland had indeed made up his mind that earth had no sweeter treasure for him to win.

He read his answer in her face, in her unconscious clinging touch, before she dared to speak it herself. And so at last the clouds cleared, and Bessie's life-path stretched plain and beautiful before her.

By-and-by she remembered to wonder about Louise, and why the engagement had been reported, and why he went home with her last night before. Edward laughed at her mystification.

"Why, hasn't she told you?" he asked. "She has a little romance connected with a cousin of mine who is away from home, and last night I had quite an important message to give her from him. It is for his sake that I have called there of late."

Bessie wondered that Louise had never told her—yet why should she wonder, since she had never whispered a word to Louise about Edward Cleveland?

There is always some little secret which we keep back even from our dearest friends; it may be love, or it may be something else, but there is always that in our hearts that is never wholly known.

I think the soul shrinks from too much self-revelation to another soul. No one knows us really but our Maker.

Shortly after in the village there were three engagements to be talked over. Bessie's, Louise's, and one more, that of Annie Wilton and Captain Melville!

So right, as represented by good true hearts, prevailed, and might, as represented by the fascinating Elise Varian, failed. Sometimes things do fall out that way.

One day Bessie told Edward, with blushing contrition, about her strategy of the geranium-wreath, by which she tried to make him not care for Elise. He laughed at the simple manoeuvre of the loving little heart, and said, kindly:

"There was no need of spells or charms, Bessie. I loved you all the while!" A. B.

THE INFLUENCE OF HABIT ON SLEEP.—Seamen and soldiers, from habit, can sleep when they will, and wake when they will. The Emperor Napoleon was a striking instance of this fact. Captain Barclay, when performing his extraordinary feat of walking one thousand miles in as many successive hours, obtained at last such a mastery over himself, that he fell asleep the instant he lay down. The faculty of remaining asleep for a great length of time is possessed by some individuals. Such was the case with Quin, the celebrated player, who could slumber for twenty-four hours successively; with Elizabeth Orvin, who slept three-fourths of her life; with Elizabeth Perkins, who slept for a week or a fortnight at a time; with Mary Lyell, who did the same for six successive

weeks—and with many others, more or less remarkable. A phenomenon of an opposite character is also sometimes observed, for there are individuals who can subsist on a surprisingly small portion of sleep. The celebrated General Elliot was an instance of this kind; he never slept more than four hours out of the twenty-four. In all other respects he was strikingly abstinent, his food consisting wholly of bread, water and vegetables. In a letter communicated to Sir John Sinclair, by John Gordon, Esq., of Swinney, mention is made of a person named John Mackay, of Skerry, who died in Strathnave, in the year 1797, aged ninety-one; he only slept on an average four hours in the twenty-four, and was a remarkably robust and healthy man. Frederick the Great of Prussia, and the illustrious surgeon, John Hunter, only slept five hours during the same period. The celebrated French General Pichegru informed Sir Gilbert Blane, that during a whole year's campaign he had not above one hour's sleep in the twenty-four.

TEMPTATION.

By J. F. SMITH.

Author of "The Will and the Way," "Woman and her Master," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XLII.

If I can fasten but one cup upon him,
With that which he hath drunk to-night already,
He'll be as full of quarrel and offence
As my young mistress's dog. *Shakespeare.*

It had long been an established point of tactics in the regiment commanded by the gallant Colonel Barratt, when they wished to get rid of a man whose birth, character, or manners displeased the fastidious taste or prejudices of the officers, to make the intended victim drunk on the first night of his introduction to the mess—to force him, under the plea of good-fellowship, to commit himself—to place himself in their power.

Then followed a series of insults, outrages, and mortifications, which terminated either in a court-martial or in the persecuted youth demanding permission to sell out, as a means of avoiding disgrace.

An appeal to the superior authorities in such cases is about as successful as an appeal to the generosity and forbearance of his persecutors.

From the commander-in-chief to the military secretary, all are leagued against the unfortunate boy who has entered the army with the mistaken idea that he is to be treated as a gentleman.

Gentleman! A well-bred valet would revolt against the indecencies and outrages to which he must submit, or see himself ruined in his profession.

Perhaps he has a father, who has made the sacrifice of his personal wishes and interests to promote his views—brothers, whose prospects in life his disgrace might compromise—sisters who would weep over it—or a mother whose heart it would break.

He submits, and drags on a weary existence, till the finer feelings and manly susceptibilities of his nature are blunted or destroyed; and he descends step by step in the scale of manhood, till he finds himself the helpless butt or tool of his persecutors—a thing to be plundered, if he is rich, or made sport of at their caprice.

In the event of his demanding, or being brought to a court-martial, he is looked upon as a troublesome fellow, his defence is crippled, witnesses suddenly lose their recollection of facts which they laughed heartily over only a week before.

Some cannot remember letters they have written; even perjury in more than one instance has been resorted to, and men who consider their honour wounded by a doubt cast on their veracity, have been known to utter the degrading lie which tarnished it for ever in the opinion of every noble mind.

Had such a statement as the above appeared in print twelve months since, the public would have scooped it with scorn and derision; now it would be a hopeless search to find any well-informed, reflective mind to pronounce the picture overcharged.

This moral taint must be removed from the army: its existence is an anomaly we cannot comprehend. That English gentlemen—proverbially the most proud, shy, exclusive creatures in the world—should be found either to submit to or uphold such a system for the sake of sporting a red coat, is more than we can comprehend.

The fact that there are such is unfortunately beyond dispute; and yet the very same men would doubtless laugh at the jacks as being proud of its bells: so much for consistency.

The members of the mess, from the colonel to Cornet Mortimer—who looked upon his release from the annoyances he nightly endured as the natural consequence of the joining of a junior officer—felt annoyed at the fact with which our hero had escaped from the first snare spread for him.

The feeling, perhaps, on the part of the latter was a very natural one; persecution generally has the effect of rendering its victim selfish.

The cornet had fallen the very first night into the trap, and the triumph of those who laid it was most unmerciful.

Frequently he had submitted to being dragged from his bed, brought down in his shirt to the mess-room, and made to go through the sword-exercise with a walking-stick, for the amusement of his brother officers—brother officers!

What a term!

To be sure, Cain and Abel were brothers—and that fact may justify the use of it.

"It's my opinion," hiccupped Lord Peapod, as soon as the adjutant had retired, "that the lawyer's clerk has had the best of it!"

Colonel Barratt knit his brows.

"Clever fellow—very!" continued the half-drunken speaker; "called you a prig—prig to your face—and you could not quarrel with him! The dear—no, no—lion, old fellow—lion, I mean—was muzzled! Capital joke! Champagne!" he added, turning to the mess-room waiter; "bring more champagne—and food—food!"

"Thanks to your folly," observed his uncle, "we have all been compelled to put up with the young tapeworm's impertinence."

At the word "tapeworm" there was a general titter—it was considered exceedingly witty from the colonel: had a sub ventured to utter it, he would have been sneered down.

The commanding officer drew his chair once more to the table, and the wine which his lordship had called for circulated freely.

"By-the-by, Marshall," said Walter Trevanian, addressing his neighbour, "it was rather pointed of the youngster to commence filling half-glasses with you; he might have waited till he got to the lieutenants—you were the last captain!"

The bully of the regiment muttered an oath, and began twisting his moustache—a sure sign that his blood was up to quarrelling point. The speaker marked the effect of his speech with secret satisfaction—for from the moment he first beheld our hero, he had conceived a feeling of more than ordinary aversion towards him.

Perhaps it was premeditation that they were doomed to cross each other's path through life.

"It was very unhandsome of him," exclaimed the little cornet, "to refuse his wine! I am sure I did not refuse mine!"

Captain Marshall placed his hand upon the poor boy's head, and ruffled his hair till the tears stood in his eyes; then, regarding him for an instant, pronounced, with a broad grin upon his insolent features:

"Orson is endowed with reason!"

There was a general shout of approval, which stung the cornet to the quick, and for the first time in his life, he ventured on a retort.

"Valentine and Orson are brothers!" he said, placing his hand on the broad shoulders of the bully.

The reply would have been received in solemn silence, had not Colonel Barratt, whose vanity was consoled by the hit at his subordinate, broke into a hearty laugh.

As a matter of etiquette, every one at the table, with the exception of Marshall, laughed too. He bit his lips in silence.

"We shall have some fun to-night!" thought Lieutenant Marshall.

Probably the offender thought so, too—for the words had scarcely escaped his lips, when he would have given a month's pay to have recalled them. In his mind's eye, he saw himself once more on the mess-room table, going through the sword-exercise in his shirt—the bully acting as fagman.

By this time the party were ripe for mischief. Lord Peapod declared that it was an *intolérable* shame that they should suffer themselves to be bullied by a mere boy, and proposed that they should smoke him out of his den—the cant word in the regiment for a youngster's chamber.

Trevanian and the cornet eagerly seconded him.

Half mad with wine—shouting, laughing, or singing fragments of obscene songs, they rushed from the mess-room, without paying the least attention to the very mild remonstrance and caution of Colonel Barratt not to carry their jest too far.

"Have him down, old fellow!" spluttered his nephew; "draw him like a badger!"

"Beware of the adjutant!"

The old pikeman be—

A hiccup prevented his lordship completing the sentence.

Clement Foster, little imagining the scene about to be enacted, was lying half dressed upon the bed, when a succession of thundering raps at the door of his room startled him from his reverie, and half a dozen voices called upon him to admit them.

"Good heavens!" he thought; "they must be tipsy!"

"Come out, young tape and parchment!" shouted the ring-leader of the band; "come and learn your exercise!"

"Who's there?" demanded our hero.

"The drill-master!"

A drunken laugh followed the reply.

Although so young, Clement—as we have shown elsewhere—was a lad not only of courage, but, what is much more to the purpose under some circumstances, of considerable presence of mind. His reception at the mess-table, the attempt to intoxicate him, and the sneer at his kind friend General De Vere, had impressed him with the idea that his brother officers were not favourably disposed towards him. The terms "tape and parchment" confirmed him. He determined to be cautious, and to let no provocation lead him from what he knew to be right.

Their further demands for admittance were heard in silence.

"They must be tired out at last!" he thought.

Little did he imagine the excess of which gentlemen and brother officers were capable. Furious at his refusing to reply to them, the door, to his astonishment, was kicked open, and his lordship, Walter Trevanian, Marsh, Mortimer, and two lieutenants, rolled into the room, with a loud view halloo, as if they had unearthed a fox.

As for Captain Marshall, he kept in the passage. Like most bullies, he was not without a certain degree of prudence, and did not think proper to compromise himself: it was time enough for him to join in the chase when the game had been fairly started.

The moment the drunken ruffians forced an entrance into his room, Clement, Foster, with great presence of mind, rang the bell for his servant George—the young man who had been gamekeeper at Briery Grange. The poor fellow had become so attached to him during his visits to Miss Mendez, that he threw up his situation to live with him. Fortunately he was not a soldier; his first idea had been to enlist, but his young master had dissuaded him from it.

"Well, gentlemen!" said our hero, determined to preserve his temper as long as possible, "what can I offer you? Wine, brandy-and-water, or coffee?"

"Curse your coffee!" replied the peer.

"No milkshops in the Guards!" added Walter Trevanian, who was the most sober of the party.

"No—no!" shouted the rest.

"May I ask what has procured me the honour of this extraordinary visit?" demanded the youth, in a tone which called forth screams of laughter from his assailants.

"You must learn your exercise—necessary, by gad! Must learn it—credit of the regiment! We are come—hiccup—to—to teach you the ———. We are gentlemen—gentle—men, by gad, sir!"

The drunken gravity with which this was uttered only provoked a smile.

"Bring him down!" added the speaker.

It had never entered into the imagination of Clement that any one of the intruders would venture to lay a hand upon him, as to all appearance he was undressed—the coverlet of the bed being drawn over him.

"Bring him down!" exclaimed Marsh, "and let us show him how the young bears are taught to dance!"

The proposal was hailed with a yell that would have done honour to a party of Indians in the back settlements of America. There was a struggle which should be foremost in dragging him from his bed. Walter Trevanian, who first laid hands upon him, had little cause to congratulate himself upon his triumph—since he received a blow which sent him reeling towards the door.

Mad with rage, the excited ruffian caught up a water-bottle on the table near him, and was about to hurl it at the head of our hero, when it was suddenly snatched from his hand. Turning round, he encountered George, who made his appearance just in time to prevent the execution of his brutal design.

"Who the devil are you?" roared the officer.

"Mr. Foster's servant, sir!" replied the young man, in very respectful tone.

"You are an impertinent scoundrel, and I am a fool for not breaking your head!"

"I never contradict my master's friends, sir!"

Incensed beyond measure by the reply, Walter Trevanian raised his hand to strike the speaker; but the ex-gamekeeper had not the least idea of submitting to such an outrage: he caught this wrist as it descended, and, bending it back, forced the young ruffian upon his knees. Once there, he lifted him suddenly in his arms, as if he was a child, and carried him out of the room, then hastened back to the assistance of Clement, who was struggling with his drunken antagonists.

In a very few seconds the apartment was cleared, the broken door replaced, and barricaded by placing a book-case and one or two trunks against it.

That done, the two young men sat down—the officer on the edge of his camp-bedstead, the servant on the remains of an easy chair—and gazed on each other for several minutes in silence. George was the first to speak.

"Sharp work, sir!"

"Why, yes!" replied Clement; "it is not exactly the reception I expected; but, as one of them said, I suppose I am like a young bear, and have all my troubles to come!"

"I don't much admire the tune!" observed his faithful follower, drily.

The cornet shrugged his shoulders, and fell into a profound reverie.

At the very commencement of the fray, Mortimer had glided out of the room and taken shelter in his own chamber—where the unfortunate youth, however, was not permitted long to remain in peace: despite the lesson they had received, his drunken companions were determined to have a victim. Marshall remembered how he had turned the laugh against him at dinner, and urged them on: so, by way of winding up the evening, they resolved upon tossing him in a blanket.

"Toss him in a blanket, by all means!" exclaimed Lord Peapod, whose left eye promised to change colour before morning. "The little sneak—he was the first to cut!"

This very gentlemanly project was duly carried into execution, amid the jests and sneers of the poor lad's companions. At every fresh bound he made in the air their shouts of drunken laughter and obscene remarks increased. The impotent rage and cries of their victim almost consoled them for their previous disappointment with Clement Foster.

"I'll endure it no longer!" cried Mortimer, half mad with shame.

"One, two, three!" cried the regimental bully, calling time.

And up went the cornet once more.

"I'll write to the general!" exclaimed the cornet, as soon as he could draw his breath.

"One, two, three!" repeated the captain, and the exercise was renewed.

"Demand a court-martial!"

This threat—which they well knew he dared not execute—was received with a general shout of laughter by his tormentors.

"Court-martial!" repeated Marsh; "why you would be cashiered!"

"Or forced to sell out!" added Trevanian.

"You were drunk the first night at mess!" observed the captain.

"And you every night!" retorted the exasperated boy, whose rage was now excited to the highest pitch: the reproaches of his friends, the injury to his future prospects—everything, except the galling insult to which he was being subjected, was forgotten.

Just as the drunken officers were about to toss him in the blanket for the fourth time, he sprang to the ground, at the risk of breaking his neck, and, with a countenance flushed with passion, advanced towards the ring-leader of the party.

"You are a coward!" he said, fixing his eyes upon his tormentor—who replied only by a coarse laugh; "I demand satisfaction!"

"You shall have it!" shouted the drunkards.

"Toss him again!" exclaimed the captain.

The officers gathered round him with the intention of repeating their outrage.

Mortimer cast a hopeless glance—he had not a friend amongst them.

"Pitch him in!" hiccuped Lord Peapod.

"And up with him!" added Trevanian.

"At least," exclaimed the cornet, "I will not be the only one who shall have occasion to remember this night's work! Bully and coward!" he added, suddenly darting forward and striking Marshall a violent blow in the face: "for the honour of the cloth you wear, resent it, if you dare!"

At this unexpected act of decision and courage, the majority of the party became suddenly sobered: to do them justice, they admired his spirit.

They were Englishmen; after all, and could sympathize with the pluck of their victim.

Not so the captain; livid and speechless with rage and astonishment, he stood for an instant like a man who had been suddenly paralysed, then raised his hand to return the blow.

There was a murmur of "Shame—shame!" and "Too bad!"

Even Lord Peapod began to feel that their fun had been carried too far—for, after all, Mortimer was a gentleman.

The ruffian drew back.

"I shall find a friend who will see me through this affair!" observed the cornet, whose passion had by this time considerably cooled.

"I shall be happy to be that friend, if Mr. Mortimer will permit me!" exclaimed Clement Foster, advancing from the end of the corridor, where he had been

an unobserved spectator of the greater part of the scene we have described; "I cannot boast of any great experience in such matters; but the little I possess is very much at his service!"

A deep blush suffused the cheeks of the young officer, as he grasped the hand thus generously extended to him.

He recollected with self-reproach the unworthy part he had so lately enacted towards him.

"Enough, sir!" said the bully, haughtily; "I shall expect to hear from you in the morning! I am not much accustomed to such child's play!" he added, alluding to the youth of his antagonist and his second. "No matter! For once I will indulge it!"

The sarcastic smile faded from the lips of our hero as he coolly observed that, "from the extraordinary scenes which had been enacted that night, both in the corridor and his own room, he should have thought Captain Marshall perfectly at home in any child's play!"

"Bravo, young tape!" shouted Lord Peapod, whose momentary fit of sobriety had once more yielded to the influence of the large quantity of champagne he had taken; "not a bad *fella*, after all! But mind where you strike another time," he added, rubbing his eye; "never mark your man, unless with the fangs! You understand!"

"Low—decidedly low!" muttered Walter Trevanian.

The voice of the adjutant was now heard.

The old soldier was making his rounds, and the tipsy band, for many reasons, felt anxious to avoid him.

He was regarded as a martinet by all the young men in the regiment, and with dislike by the seniors—from the commanding officer down to the junior captain; for he never joined in any of their orgies, and was so punctual in the execution of his duty, that they had long since resigned all hope of catching him tripping.

He was the only man in the regiment whom Marshall feared as well as hated.

"As this ridiculous affair is to be settled elsewhere," he said, "not a word more is necessary! I presume, sir, you understand the reserve usual amongst gentlemen on these occasions?"

This was addressed to Clement Foster, who replied only by a bow.

His blood was thoroughly up, and he feared to trust his speech.

"Not a word to the adjutant!" observed Lord Peapod.

"I am no informer, my lord!" observed our hero, impatiently.

As the adjutant passed the ground, he looked earnestly at his old friend General De Vere's protégé, in the hope, perhaps, of being of some service to him.

From the torn blanket and the state of the corridor he guessed what had taken place; but the countenance of the new man continued impassable.

The usual salutation between brother officers took place, and the lately noisy party separated for the night—Mortimer accompanying Clement to his room, to talk over with him the necessary arrangements for the morning.

CHAPTER XLIII

Some fiery top, with new communion vain,
Who sleeps on brambles till he kills his man;
Some frolic drunkard, reeling from a feast,
Provokes a broil, and stabs him for a jest.

Dr. Johnson.

Those who are acquainted with the routine of military life will readily understand that very few events occurred in the regiment, which did not reach the ears of the commanding officer.

Colonel Barratt, on his return from the castle, where he had passed the evening, was informed of everything that had transpired in his absence. With all his weakness, aristocratic prejudice, and vanity, he was keenly alive to the consequences of a duel taking place under such circumstances; court of inquiry, exposure, the "infernal papers"—as he invariably designated the press—and a vast amount of obloquy, if not disgrace.

Before retiring for the night, he sent a message to Captain Marshall to be with him by eight the following morning: he was determined that the affair should be arranged.

When his visitor arrived, he found the colonel *en robe de chambre*, sipping his chocolate.

"Bad affair!" exclaimed the latter, in a querulous tone, which showed how much he was annoyed; "discipline is going to the dogs!"

There were many, and not incompetent judges, who thought it had already arrived there.

"Tell me all about it, Marshall!" he added; "how did it occur?"

The captain gave a not very exaggerated account of the night's proceeding, making it as favourable to himself as possible—a colouring which his commanding officer duly allowed for.

"And what do you intend to do?" demanded Colonel Barratt, who had listened attentively to every word.

"Send a bullet through the heart of the young jack-ass!" replied the bully, in a tone of ferocity which very much shocked the good taste of the aristocratic commander, who considered an emotion of any kind exceedingly vulgar.

"You must do nothing of the sort, Marshall!" quietly observed the colonel; "you forget Mortimer is but a boy! His uncle, Lord Pomeroy, is in the household! The affair would make a stir, and all that sort of thing! Had it been the new man, I probably should not have interfered; but Lord Pomeroy's nephew! It won't do—won't do!"

"But be struck me!" urged the captain. "You must have expected that he would do so at some time or other!" observed the colonel, coolly; "he is a young man of good family!"

Marshall, who was a mere parvenu, and had risen by alternately flattering and bullying his way in the service, bit his lips in silence. He felt that his influence over the boys, as he termed them, would be at an end if he permitted such an insult as the one he had received to pass without a meeting.

"I really don't see how I can pass over such an insult!" he replied; "it was given—"

"I have considered!" interrupted his commanding officer; "and I tell you that the affair must be arranged! You understand me—*must*! I have nothing but plague and anxiety: the regiment is in a dreadful state, and the officers worse than the men! There's my nephew," he added, "ill from a bilious attack—at least so the doctor reports—the consequence of last night's orgie, I suspect—won't he fit for service these five days!"

His visitor could scarcely repress a smile: he had calculated that it would take about that time to restore his lordship's eye to its proper colour.

"Reflect!" he said; "the ridiculous position I shall be placed in!"

A slight shrug of the colonel's shoulders intimated how very little that consideration weighed with him.

"I shall be laughed at!"

"Laugh with them!"

"Cut!"

"For a short time, possibly!" coolly observed the commander; "but the affair will soon blow over. I tell you, Marshall," he continued, in a more serious tone, "that it cannot be! Sorry to disappoint your very natural desire of shooting the young puppy—but I am compelled to do it—unless you give me your word, I must order you under arrest! You know the consequence—your name is not in the best odour at the Horse Guards! An inquiry once commenced, heaven only knows where it may end: it might possibly reach even—"

"To yourself!" exclaimed the captain, finishing the sentence for him.

Colonel Barratt listened to this little ebullition of temper with an indulgent smile: he had three relatives in the Upper House and several in the Commons. What could he possibly have to fear beyond the annoyance of the thing? Still he did not wish to urge the patience of his visitor beyond its legitimate bounds—for, once thoroughly roused, he knew him to be capable of any amount of indiscretion: so, after many pros and cons, a compromise was at last effected, by which the honour of the bully should be spared, and the life of Cornet Mortimer assured.

With this understanding they parted.

When Clement Foster waited upon Captain Marshall, an hour later, he was received by that gentleman with the frigid politeness which etiquette prescribes as the rule of conduct on similar occasions. He was referred to Lieutenant Marsh, to settle the time and place of meeting—which was ultimately fixed for eleven, in the riding-school: an arrangement which insured them against the probability of observation—as the officers were accustomed to use it as a shooting-gallery.

"Where do you intend to hit him, Marshall?" said Walter Trevelyan, as Mortimer and his second entered the riding-school.

"Haven't made up my mind yet!"

"In the heart, I hope!" added the first speaker; "it's little use aiming at his head—no vital part there!"

And, with a cold smile at his own heartless jest, he drew on one side whilst the seconds measured the ground.

The officers who had assisted in the frolic of the preceding night, with the exception of Lord Peapod, were every one present.

Beta was freely offered, ten to three, that the captain hit his boyish antagonist, whose firm demeanour, *par parenthèse*, considerably raised him in their good opinion.

"Heaven bless you, my dear fellow!" whispered Clement Foster, as he placed the pistol in the hand of his principal; "you have nothing to reproach yourself with!"

As he drew aside to give the signal, he observed that Marshall was the paler of the two.

(To be continued.)

FACETIÆ.

"LANDLORD, give me a glass of brandy. I've just told the truth, and want to get the taste out of my mouth." Thus exclaimed a pettifogger, as he rushed from the bar of justice to that of *soak*. Queer how strange food disagrees with people, isn't it?

DEFINITIONS.

Bachelor—A dandy-lion run to seed in a garden of beautiful flowers. The ingrafted crab-tree of humanity.

Letter—Conversation with the pen.

Album—A drawing-room man-trap set by young ladies.

Surgeon—A skilful workman who repairs the damages made by the wear and tear of the machinery of life—

An ill that oft must be endured.
When ill are wanted to be cured.

Woman—An essay on grace, in one volume, elegantly bound.

Gentleman—A manual of good manners, bound in cloth.

Old Maid—A quiver full of arrows with no bow (bean) attached.

Wit—Wisdom masquerading.

Heart—The best card in the chance game of Matrimony; sometimes overcome by diamonds and knaves; often won by tricks; and occasionally treated in a shuffling manner, and then cut altogether.

"You here, Jones? How the dickens did you find your way out?" "Find my way out! what do you mean?" "Why, the last I saw of you, you were lost in slumber." "Ah, well, I rode out on a night-mare!"

DIDN'T CARE.—"How many stars are there in the heavens?" asked one of Confucius. "I don't know," answered he, "I mind things close at hand." "Then how many hairs are there on a cat's back?" resumed the questioner. "I don't care," said the philosopher.

A VERY worthy minister, settled not a hundred miles from our metropolis, was one Sunday morning descending upon the importance of plain speaking. "Why, my hearers," said he, "St. Paul never used any 'highfalutin' expressions. No; he always spoke plain Anglo-Saxon!"

A V. TUE.

"Pa," said a hopeful juvenile, the other day, to his indulgent sire,—"ps, haven't I got a veto as well as the president or governor?"

"No, my child."

"Yes I have, pa," declared the urchin as his father was proceeding to explain the matter to the boy's comprehension: "my fifth toe is a V. tue, I reckon."

"Take that child to his mother," screamed the horrified parent; "he's ruined."

TO OBTAIN A PLATEFUL.—A shrewd preacher, after an eloquent charity sermon, said to his hearers: "I am afraid, from the sympathy displayed in your countenances, that some of you will give too much. I caution you, therefore, that you should be just before you are generous; and wish you to understand that I desire no one who cannot pay his debts to put anything in the plate." The collection was a rare one.

A VERY singular sort of a man sent for a magistrate to write his will. After mentioning a number of bequests, he went on—"Item, I give and bequeath to my beloved brother, Zack, one thousand pounds." "Why, you are not worth half that sum in the world," interrupted the magistrate. "Well, no matter if I ain't," replied the other; "it's my will that brother Zack should have that sum, and he may work and get it if he has a mind to."

ASSURANCE FOR FEMALE BEAUTY.—A new assurance association has been established at Santa Fé, the object of which is to assure female beauty. The plan stated is as follows:—A woman may estimate her personal beauty at whatever price she pleases, and assure at that value, paying a proportionate sum according to the period assured for. The company assures female beauty from the age of fifteen to that of thirty, paying the assurer a specific sum if her beauty goes off or is accidentally injured during a given time.

A NEW freak of fashion is the May-bug walking-dress. This dress is made of pieces of silk, representing a May-bug, under shelter of a parasol, walking

in a garden, stitched on white muslin. The bonnet is to suit, it being of Chambray gauze, trimmed with real May-bugs. The brooch, bracelets, earrings, and other ornaments are also images of the same insect. Of course, if a gentleman catches a lady and pretends to have fancied he was catching a May-bug, the pretty idea will be pardoned.

"SAM, what fish in the salt water weighs the least?" "Why, Julius, what ignorant questions you ax yer bretheren. Minims weigh de least, ob course." "No, no, sah—dat's wrong now; it am the porpas weighs nothing—cos he's got no scales."

SOCIAL CONDITION OF THE RIO GRANDE.

The disorganized social condition in the neighbourhood of the Rio Grande is illustrated by the following conversation in a coffee-house at Brownsville the other day.

A gray-looking Mexican pleasantly addressed a Frenchman who understood the language, saying:

"Excuse me, my friend, but it seems to me we've met somewhere?"

"I can't remember having met you anywhere," replied the other.

"That's strange," said the Mexican; "I was sure I had met you; but now are you right sure you never saw me anywhere?"

The Frenchman, taking a look at him, said:

"Well, I am very certain I never met you before in my life."

"Well, then, I'm mistaken in the man, that's all, and I beg your pardon. Will you take a drink, my friend?"

The Frenchman accepted, and they drank and separated.

The cream of this interview consisted in the fact that the two had met, and that the Frenchman knew the Mexican the moment he saw him. The Mexican was one of the gang of robbers who recently pillaged the steamer *Montezuma*. The Frenchman was on board at the time, and it was this very robber who stripped him of his watch and boots and clothes, even to his last shirt. The Frenchman declined recognizing him, or having him arrested, because, if he did so, he felt sure of being "spotted" and murdered by others of the gang. Sweet state of society!

IN THE BLUES.—We believe that considerable consternation and distress were caused in the fashionable circles (of certain areas) by the intelligence that Sir Richard Mayne had ordered the police to learn the cut-laws exercise.—*Fun*.

BRITANNIA METAL.—A correspondent suggests that the present rage for an ironed navy is but another form of the testimonial mania. The Admiralty desires to present Britannia with a "service of plate."—*Fun*.

TAKING HIS PICK.—At a late race-meeting in France, says the *Court Journal*, an English pickpocket had the impudence to relieve several *sergens de ville* of their watches. It is rumoured in fashionable circles that on his return to town he expressed to his friends his belief that his victims were called *sergens de veal*, because they looked like policemen bound in calf!—*Fun*.

ONLY TOO SOLVENT.—Mr. Thomas Hughes says that one of the characteristics of the House of Commons is the "excessive solvency" of the members. The Election Committee agree with him.—*Punch*.

AN AUTHORITY.

"And so, Mr. Frizzell, you think I ought to have my hair washed yellow! And pray, why?"

"Well, ma'am (if you'll excuse me for saying so), black hair is never admitted into really good society now, you know!" *Punch*.

THE LORD MAYOR AND HIS LABOURS.

Sam Slick lays it down that "life is not all beer and skittles." Assuredly the life of the Lord Mayor is not all punch and turtle, as they who only feast with him might possibly believe. Here is one of his small duties, and he has very many large ones:

"Every morning after breakfast the Lord Mayor signs upon an average two hundred and fifty receipts for City coal dues and the like. . . . In the course of his year of office, the Lord Mayor signs his name to official documents fifty thousand times."

When young Romeo asked Juliet, "What's in a name," he clearly had no notion of this task of the Lord Mayor. Else he might have known that a name may, in some cases, cause its miserable owner the writing of some fifty thousand signatures a year. We wonder if the Lord Mayor has to sign his surname merely, or if he is obliged to write his other names as well? Imagine what a nuisance it would be to a Lord Mayor, if he always had to write a string of lengthy names, such, for instance, as "Augustus Jeremiah William Alexander Winterbottom," whenever any document was brought for him to sign. We should advise a man, who fancies that his son may be Lord Mayor, to give the boy a short name, such as

Tom, or Hal, or Rob. Indeed, to speak from sad experience, if parents never gave their children more than one short name in baptism, what a comfort it would be to them in all their after life!—*Punch*.

A GRAND IDEA.

In this age of Anniversary Keeping, we earnestly hope that an opportunity, which is this year offered for a festival of the first magnitude, will not be lost by those who are addicted to such practices. We need hardly say that it is 1866, and consequently we are approaching the Two-hundredth Anniversary of THE GREAT FIRE OF LONDON.

September, 2, 3, and 4, 1666.

Surely, here is a splendid opening for a celebration. We trust that a committee will at once be got together, and sworn not to quarrel—much. Let a prize be offered for a Poem on the Fire (with no Phoenix), and announce that it will be recited on the top of the Monument, by Captain Shaw. Let processions be arranged, which, on the three days, shall perambulate the streets occupying the site of those which were destroyed. Flame-coloured banners, badges, and cockades. The Fire Brigade to attend at the intervals of service elsewhere, bringing new engines. The Floating Engines to play on the City at stated hours—inhabitants to be at liberty to stay in-doors or carry umbrellas at pleasure. Mr. Vining might be induced to have his House-on-Fire scene enacted every hour during the Festival. Dinners and speeches as a matter of course. Perhaps the Duke of Sutherland would kindly act as President. Really, such an occasion for a National Observance should not be overlooked by those who like opportunities of being "in evidence," and their name is Legion.—*Punch*.

ONE REASON CERTAINLY!

First Artist: "Who'll be the next Academician?"
Second Artist: "Oh, Faddler, my dear fellow, unquestionably."
First Artist (incredulous): "Nonsense!"
Second Artist: "Oh, there's no doubt about it! A very good fellow, you know, and he's lived a long time at St. John's Wood."

"THE HOUSE AND THE HOME."—A new historical drama is to be produced in Paris. Between the first and second acts "a lapse of two hundred years" occurs. The audience will of course rest themselves in the interval; but if the piece is adapted and brought out in London, will our decorous mammas, during this aforementioned interval of two hundred years, allow their daughters to sit down in the lap of two centuries?—*Punch*.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

SIMPLE PROCESS FOR SILVERING.—An employee of the Bavarian Mint has published an improved process for silvering copper, brass, and other alloys by means of a solution of silver in cyanide of potassium; the difference from the usual method consists in the use of fine-silings, with which the objects are coated; when the silvering solution is applied, an immediate deposition of a much more durable character taking place. The silings are easily removed by rinsing in water, and may be used repeatedly for the same purpose. Metallic iron may be coated with copper in the same manner, by substituting for the silver solution of copper in cyanide; and over this copper deposit a coating of silver may be applied.

TO PREVENT THE LOSS OF AROMA IN ROASTING COFFEE.

The berries of coffee once roasted, lose every hour somewhat of their aroma, in consequence of the influence of the oxygen of the air, which, owing to the porosity of the roasted berries, it can easily penetrate.

This pernicious change may best be avoided by strewing over the berries, when the roasting is completed, and while the vessel in which it has been done is still hot, some powdered white or brown sugar (half an ounce to one pound of coffee is sufficient). The sugar melts immediately, and by well shaking or turning the roaster quickly, it spreads over all the berries and gives each one a fine glaze, impervious to the atmosphere. They have then a shining appearance, as though covered with a varnish, and they in consequence lose their smell entirely, which, however, returns in a high degree as soon as they are ground.

After this operation they are to be shaken out rapidly from the roaster and spread out on a cold plate of iron, so that they may cool as soon as possible. If the hot berries are allowed to remain heaped together, they begin to sweat, and when the quantity is large, the heating process, by the influence of air, increases to such a degree that at last they take fire spontaneously. The roasted and glazed berries should be kept in a dry place, because the covering of sugar attracts moisture.

For special cases, such as journeys and marches,

where it is impossible to be burdened with the necessary machines for roasting and grinding, coffee may be carried in a powdered form, and its aromatic properties preserved by the following process:—One pound of the roasted berries are reduced to powder, and immediately wetted with a syrup of sugar, obtained by pouring on three ounces of sugar two ounces of water, letting them stand a few minutes. When the powder is thoroughly wetted with the syrup, two ounces of finely-powdered sugar are to be added, mixed well with it, and the whole is then to be spread out in the air to dry. The sugar locks up the volatile parts of the coffee, so that when it is dry they cannot escape. If coffee is now to be made, cold water is to be poured over a certain quantity of the powder, and made to boil. Ground coffee prepared in this way, and which lay exposed to the air for one month, yielded on being boiled as good a beverage as one made of freshly-roasted berries.

TO A LONELY SWALLOW.

WELCOME, sweet one, we greet thee,
As ye swoop from budding tree!
As ye skim the bluish stream,
Wakening from its winter's dream:
Bring ye on thy lightning wing,
With the whisks that lightly sing,
Spring to clothe the land again—
Flowers to gild the darksome plain.

As ye stoop to kiss the flowers,
Peeping from deserted bowers;
As ye mount the light blue sky,
Sounding forth thy sportive cry;
Ye bring back here the days of yore
Ere ye left our native shore.
Herald of the feathered tribe,
Here ye wing with happier tide!

Here ye wheel in circles round,
Swiftly floating o'er the ground,
Closely brushing over head,
Silvery stranger nought ye dread!
There, 'midst emerald meads you stray,
Tipping forests on the way;
Gliding down the vale below—
Onward, upward, off you go.

We hail thy presence, sweet bird!
Although thy note is never heard
Sweet strains to gaily pour. The
As thy wings flit to and fro
Ye bring, lone harpinger, a sight
Long estranged through Winter's might.
Flowers, birds, follow in thy track;
Nature revives—sunshine hastens back.
G. O. SWAIN.

GEMS.

A MAN never has the least difficulty in finding a devoted friend, except when he needs one.

MODESTY promotes worth, but conceals it, just as leaves aid the growth of fruit and hide it from view.

PLEASURE is never solid enough to bear analysis. It should be passed lightly over, as bugs are, never letting the feet remain a minute in the same place.

It is by here a little and there a little, by untiring assiduity, and by strokes incessantly repeated, that good is done, whether in the material or the moral world.

KINDNESS makes sunshine whenever it goes; it finds its way into the hidden treasures of the heart, and brings forth treasures of gold; harshness, on the contrary, seals them up for ever.

TIME.—Years rush by us like the wind. We see not whence the eddy comes, nor whitherward it is tending; and we seem ourselves to witness their flight without a sense that we are changed; and yet time is beguiling man of his strength as the winds rob the woods of their foliage. He is a wise man who, like the millwright, employs every gust.

It is a delight to have gifts made to you by those whom you esteem and love, because then such gifts are merely to be considered as fringes to the garment—as inconsiderable additions to the mighty treasure of their affection, adding a grace, but no additional value, to what before was precious, and proceeding as naturally out of that as leaves burgeon out upon the trees; but you feel it to be different when there is no regard for the giver to realise the gift—when it simply takes the stand among your property, as so much money's value.

LIFE WITHOUT AIM.—That person who spends a whole existence without a realization of the great ends for which he is designed, without feeling a soaring of the soul above mere mercenary motives and desires, not knowing that he is a portion, as it were, of one vast machine, in which each piece has a part to per-

form, having no heart beating in common with those of his fellowmen, no feeling in which self is not the beginning and the end, may well be said not to live. His mind is shut in by a moral darkness, and he merely exists, a blank in the world, and goes to the tomb with scarcely a regret.

STATISTICS.

ELECTORAL STATISTICS.—A return lately issued shows that there are in England 121 municipal boroughs and market and other towns with a population of 5,000 and upwards, which are not now represented in Parliament. Among the largest of them are Burnley, in Lancashire, which has a population of 28,700; Staleybridge, which has 24,921; Croydon, 20,325; Gravesend, 18,722; St. Helen's, Lancashire, 18,396; Middlesbrough, 18,992; Leamington, 17,958; &c. Then there are fourteen metropolitan parishes, or parts of parishes, containing a population of upwards of 5,000, which are not within any represented borough; they are as follows:—Chelsea, 63,439; Fulham, 15,539; Hammersmith, 24,519; Hampstead, 19,106; Kensington, 70,103; Battersea, 19,600; Clapham, 20,894; part of Lambeth, 19,146; Putney, 6,481; Streatham, 8,027; Wandsworth, 13,546; Leigh, 6,162; Lewisham, 22,808; and part of Plumstead, 19,219.

The salaries of the National Debt Office amount to 15,258*l.* per annum; Secret Services take 32,000*l.* During the past year the Comptroller of the Stationery Office has sold waste paper, blue books, &c., to the extent of nearly 10,000*l.* The *London Gazette* showed a balance in its own favour of 13,308*l.* odd, and appears to be largely increasing in circulation; the profits last year were the above sum, against 11,166*l.* odd last year. The *Edinburgh Gazette* brings in a profit to the amount of 2,371*l.*, against 1,913*l.* last year. The *Dublin Gazette*, 858*l.*, against 705*l.* Stationery, printing, binding, &c., for the various Government departments, amounted to nearly 247,000*l.* last year; Parliamentary printing to 75,000*l.* The postage of some public departments is enormous: for this year the following sums are asked on that account:—Admiralty, 19,000*l.*; Colonial Office, 14,600*l.*; Foreign Office, nearly 14,000*l.*; Inland Revenue Office, 13,000*l.*; War Office, 28,000*l.* odd. The Science and Art Department asks an increase of nearly 500*l.* in this item.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A PRESENT of eight very beautiful Arab horses of the famous Dloff breed is about to be despatched by the Sultan to the Emperor Napoleon.

THE Directress of the Fenian Sisterhood in New York has issued an appeal to "all the true-hearted women of America," asking their co-operation in a fair, to be held next month.

THE authorities at St. Martin's-le-Grand have received information from the United States Post-office of the establishment of a United States line of mail packets between Liverpool and Baltimore.

DARING OF A HAWK.—Last week, the inmates of a house at Ochtertyre, Crieff, were startled by a hawk bursting through the window and attempting to seize a canary bird which was confined in a cage. The intruder was captured and destroyed.

THE Louvre has just received from the Duke de Luynes the donation of a bas-relief on black marble representing a warrior armed with his lance. This piece of sculpture, which is the only specimen of Moabite art known in the museums of France, was discovered in Palestine by M. de Saulcy, on his first expedition, but was brought away by the Duke during his late scientific excursion around the Dead Sea.

AN INTERESTING PHENOMENON.—The lovers of the marvellous will be interested in knowing that a poor woman named Howe, living in Minor-court, Union-street, Borough-road, has recently given birth to a remarkably fine child, which can boast of six fingers on each hand, and six toes on each foot, the superfluous members branching in each case from the fifth or smallest finger or toe, and having the nail completely formed.

IN ENGLAND the ordnance survey is proceeding in the counties of Surrey, Kent, and Hampshire; and a large party of surveyors is employed in London in completing the plans of the metropolis, which were surveyed only in block fifteen years ago. In Scotland the counties of Aberdeen, Argyll, Banff, Elgin, and Inverness are being surveyed; and the plans of Perthshire, Kincardineshire, Buteshire, and Aberdeenshire are in progress of publication. In Ireland the survey of the counties of Louth and Dublin is being revised. The operations for connecting the triangulation of England with that of France have been successfully completed.

CONTENTS.

	Page		Page
THE GOLDEN MASK ...	129	FACTS ...	128
FASHION & GENTLEMEN ...	132	STATISTICS ...	129
MARRIED, NOT MARRIED ...	133	TO A LOVELY SWALLOW ...	129
THE CULTIVATION OF ...	135	GEMS ...	129
MEMORY ...	135	MISCELLANEOUS ...	129
A WORD ABOUT GIPSIERS ...	135		
THE ROYAL ORDER OF ...	136		
VICTORIA AND ALBERT ...	136		
BRITANNIA, THE MAN ...	136		
HATER ...	136		
AN OFFICIAL REDEMPTION ...	140		
THIRTIETH ...	141		
STANLEY LOCKWOOD ...	145		
THE RACE FOR LIFE ...	148		
OSMOND ...	149		
SCIENCE ...	152		
THE GRANITE WEALTH ...	153		
TEMPTATION ...	154		

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MARY ARNOLD.—By his own choice solely.
J. L.—You will find recipes given in Nos. 29 and 83 of THE LONDON READER.
G. R. C.—Do not use German yeast. English yeast is preferable.

LILLY W.—The handwriting is excellent. The hair is a bonny brown.

FANNY.—The hair is a light red, of the tint now most fashionable. (Handwriting not bad.)

BLANCH.—The handwriting is moderately good. The hair is a brown.

D. F.—Consult a medical man. Your writing is fit for the duties of a clerk.

OSMUND GARY.—Apply at the Commander-in-Chief's office, Horse Guards, Whitehall.

SPORTSMAN.—Send your gun to a gunmaker to be browned. It will cost you about 2s. 6d.

CORRESPONDENT.—Try and find a friend of yours who knows the lady and obtain an introduction.

A FRIEND.—The handwriting is illegible; we cannot understand what "A Friend" wants to know. Write plainly.

TIMOTHY AND A SUBSCRIBER.—All depilatories are injurious to the skin. Better have a hairy face than a hump-back. Console yourself.

J. W.—We cannot advise without seeing the indenture of apprenticeship. In such a document the case you suggest is ordinarily provided for.

W. E. C.—Brave men, like poets, are "born, not made." Live well, take plenty of exercise in the open air; join a volunteer corps. Handwriting businesslike.

R. S. B.—Your brothers and sisters have an equal right with yourself to the money. It matters not that you are the eldest son. Apply at once to a respectable solicitor.

TOM.—Up to the middle of the last century, the cost of conveying a ton of goods from Birmingham to London was 7s., and from Leeds to London 13s.

AN OLD SUBSCRIBER.—The postage of a single number of THE LONDON READER is 1d., but three numbers will go for 2d. To several correspondents we repeat that any number, monthly part, or bound volume may be obtained of the publisher.

OLIVIERA.—Try a mixture of neat's-foot oil and rose water in equal quantities. This is the most efficient and harmless cosmetic with which we are acquainted. We speak of cosmetics: early rising, fresh air, cheerful company, good food, and temperance will seldom fail of producing a good complexion.

J. H. R.—To preserve eggs, put into a tub or vessel one bushel of quicklime, two pounds of salt, half a pound of cream of tartar, and mix the same together with as much water as will reduce the composition or mixture to that consistency that it will cause an egg put into it to swim with its top just above the liquid, then put and keep the eggs therein.

G. A. E.—Sir C. Wren received but 2000l. a year as salary while engaged on the erection of St. Paul's Cathedral, and Inigo Jones was paid but 2s. 4d. per day as architect and surveyor of the Whitehall Banqueting House, and 400l. per annum for house-rent, clerks, and incidental expenses.

LIZZIE ANNIE.—To improve the complexion the following is very efficacious:—Mix flowers of sulphur in a little milk; and if, after standing an hour or two, the milk (without the sulphur) be rubbed into the skin, it will keep it soft, and make the complexion clear. Make over night, and use in the morning before washing. Only sufficient for one application should be made at a time. 2. To whiten your hands, take a wineglassful of eau-de-Cologne, and one of lemon-juice; then mix two cakes of brown Windsor soap to a powder, and mix all well together. When hard it will be an excellent soap for whitening the hands.

FRANK.—The term blackguard originated in the days of Elizabeth, and was applied, partly in sport, and partly in contempt, to the lowest grade of court servants—the carriers of coats and wood, turnspits, and labourers in the scullery. All of these followed the court wherever it went. Hodge, in his "Illustrations," says: "Her majesty, by some means I know not, was lodged at his house. Hodge, far from meeting for her highness, but sifter for the blackguard." The term blackguard was applied in Ireland at that day to all abandoned women of violent character, and to low ruffians, from which it passed to its present use.

The following ladies address, with views matrimonial, our gentlemanly readers:—

MAY, twenty-two, dark hair and eyes, rather tall, and very domesticated.

LILLIAN LEE feels certain she would make a good wife if she could meet with a good husband. Understands cooking, housekeeping, needlework, thinks she could make a

shirt, and would guarantee to keep the buttons on when made. "Lillian" has black hair, jet black eyes, and fair complexion. The gentleman must be about twenty-one, and good, rather than handsome.

NELLY, medium height, dark hair, grey eyes, good teeth, twenty-two.

A. G., twenty-one, passable in appearance, good tempered, and with a little money. A steady young man residing in London preferred.

ANNIE, nineteen, of respectable family, 5 ft. in height, good figure, dark brown hair, blue eyes, and thoroughly domesticated. Gentleman must be of good social position; if tall and dark preferred.

ALICE, eighteen, tall, dark hair and eyes, considered nice looking, but has no money. (Handwriting fair, but too careless.)

LUCY and NELLY. "Lucy" is twenty-one, 5 ft. 2 in. in height, fair, and although considered rather plain looking, is thoroughly domesticated, and very fond of home.

"Nelly" is 4 ft. 10 in. in height, fair, with blue eyes, and of a very loving disposition.

MARION and TINY. "Marion" is of middle height, with blue eyes, light brown hair, and rather stout. "Tiny" is smaller in stature, has dark grey eyes, wavy brown hair. "Tiny" wishes to be a tradesman's wife, as she has been educated for it.

MINNEHAWA, nineteen, neither pretty nor beautiful, although passable, respectably connected, and in comfortable circumstances, is dark complexioned, and has dark curly hair and dark eyes. Respondent must be between twenty-one and thirty years of age, good principles, and respectably connected. An officer in the merchant service preferred.

HELENA and BLANCHE. "Helena" is 5 ft. 5 in. in height, dark hair and eyes, aged nineteen. "Blanche" has very dark hair and eyes, 5 ft. 4 in. in height, aged seventeen. Both thoroughly domesticated, and will have fortunes when of age. (With more care, the handwriting would be better.)

TRACY and GRACE. The former nineteen, 5 ft. 4 in. in height, fair, nice eyes, teeth, and usually considered good looking. The latter eighteen, fair, with expressive grey eyes, light hair, 5 ft. in height, and good tempered. Both are well educated and have small incomes. Candidates must be tall, dark, and of kind and loving dispositions.

TO SPEAK.

Come haste thee here, thou gentle spring,

With birds and flowers,

Soft air, sweet strains, bright gladness bring,

And genial hours

Array the earth again in green

To please the eye,

Let rustling leaves hang out their screen,

Sweet zephyrs sigh.

Let all thy soft enchantments play

Around my heart,

Let flowers bright make glad my way

From stiffs apart.

That 'neath thy smiles I may forget

The weary past.

And, ere life's changing sun hath set,

Find peace at last.

I.A.

The following appeal, with views matrimonial, to our fair readers:—

W. JONES, a widower, thirty-three, in a good business, and of a cheerful disposition. The lady must be about his own age.

A LAWYER'S CLERK, in the North, twenty-six, respectably connected, and with a salary of 800l. a year. A little money required to commence housekeeping with. A reply from "Alice" is solicited.

W. M., a soldier in a mounted and scientific corps, is 5 ft. 7 in. in height, and is considered good looking (has learnt a trade), and is sober and industrious, but would wish to leave the service. Respondent must be a Presbyterian or Episcopalian, and have a little money.

HARRY VINCENT, twenty-five, dark, considered good looking, with a private income of about 1200l. If responded to by a lady with a small income would not object to be married immediately. A young widow not objected to. "H. V." has also great expectations, and very soon hopes to be in a business which will bring him in about 6000l. per annum.

FATHERFUL, a widower, thirty, with two boys, a good mechanic, earning 20s. to 25s. per week, would like to hear from the daughter of a mechanic, an orphan, or a widow without children, not above twenty-three.

A. B. D., a young man, 5 ft. 11 in. dark hair, in a good business, and respectably connected. The lady may be a widow, but she must have some money, and be of respectable family.

T. E. and J. F., two sons of Neptune, at present in the Royal Navy. "J. F." is twenty-four, 5 ft. 9 in. in height, fair, dark hazel eyes, good looking, and good tempered. "T. F." is twenty-three, 5 ft. 6 in. in height, dark hair and eyes, good natured. Would like to correspond with two domestic young ladies between eighteen and twenty, who are good housekeepers, good tempered, and loving.

HARRY ST. CLARE, the son of a wealthy farmer, twenty, 5 ft. 9 in. in height, considered very handsome, a good temper and amiable disposition, fond of music, singing, and dancing. Lady must not be over twenty-one.

J. B. and J. M., R.N., having a little over two years to serve to complete their time. "J. B." is twenty-five, dark, dark eyes and hair, 5 ft. 10 in. in height. "J. M." is twenty-four, dark, dark hair and eyes, 5 ft. 9 in. in height, very temperate, steady, and fond of home.

FREDERICK CHARLES and ADOLPHUS, R.N. "Adolphus" is twenty-one, dark hair and eyes, and considered good looking. "Frederick Charles" is twenty, with fair hair, large blue eyes, very fair, and of a pleasing countenance, and considered good looking. Both sober, steady, and industrious.

H. G., a respectable mechanic, twenty-nine, 5 ft. 7 in. in height, and considered passable, with good expectations, would prefer a respectable tradesman's daughter, living near Bristol, from eighteen to twenty-one years of age, dark hair and eyes, 5 ft. 2 in. to 5 ft. 6 in. in height, must be rather pretty, and educated.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:—

A. Y. and A. O. V.—LUCY and BLANCHE. Both ladies are of medium height, and of a loving and cheerful disposition

—AMY S., nineteen, very passable in appearance, but not so say pretty, rather light, 5 ft. 8 in. in height, of a highly respectable family, and when of age will have an income of 1000l. per year—MINNIE and KATE. "Minnie" would choose "A. Y." and "Kate" "A. O." "Minnie" is rather short, fair complexion, dark hair and hazel eyes; "Kate" is tall, light hair, blue eyes, and very fair. Both are amiable, good tempered, fond of home, considered handsome, and will have large fortunes on their brides' day. Lastly—ANNIE and HARRIET (No. 154). The former is twenty, with grey eyes and dark brown hair, good tempered, and very domesticated; "Harriett" is nineteen, with blue eyes and light brown hair, and very good tempered. Both are considered good looking, and of the medium height.

D'ARTAGNAN, PORTNERS, and DE SEVIGNE by—CLARA, NELLIE, and ANNIE. The latter is of medium height, dark wavy hair, blue eyes, and nineteen, and would prefer "D'Artagnan." "Clara" has brown hair, hazel eyes, and fair complexioned, is 5 ft. 2 in. in height, and thinks she would just suit "Portners." "Nellie," who is seventeen, 5 ft. in height, of a loving and merry disposition, and a decided brunette, with "De Seville." All are respectably connected, and have small incomes of their own—ROSS, VIOLET, and FAULWELL. "Ross" is tall and dark; "Violet" is a tall blonde; and "Faulewell" is a petite brunette; they are cousins, and will, when they come of age, come in possession of tidy fortunes. They are considered by their friends to be handsome girls.

DECATUR BY—LACHRYMOSA B. B.

W. H. A. is thought suitable by—STACY, who is rather tall, fair, good tempered, domesticated, and fond of home, but no expectations—MAGGIE, eighteen, rather tall, dark hair, hazel eyes, and good looking—FRANCES C., eighteen, 5 ft. 4 in. in height, and a fortune at twenty.

FRANCIS's description of himself has called forth replies from—PAMELA, a brunette, twenty-five, warm disposition, highly educated, a pianist and French scholar, and thoroughly domesticated; no fortune, but will receive a small income at the death of her surviving parent; and—H. G., 5 ft. 6 in. in height, brown hair, grey eyes, of a loving disposition. (Handwriting in good.)

NELLY is responded to by—EMMA, twenty, good disposition, domesticated, medium height, dark hair, brown-coloured, and fond of music—MRS. W., nineteen, fair, well educated, plays and sings, a good housekeeper, good tempered, but no fortune—NELLIE, nineteen, tall, blue eyes, brown wavy hair, educated and amiable, and has good expectations.

ALFRED PARKER by—CHRISTINA R., twenty, of medium height, dark complexion, long curly hair, considered good looking, and just the girl to love and appreciate a kind hearted husband; and—EDITH, who is rather dark, good looking, an amiable disposition, 5 ft. 4 in. in height, fond of business, but unfortunately has no money.

ROSS and BELLIE are responded to by—W. H. G. B., nineteen years of age, 5 ft. 6 in. in height, dark wavy hair, blue eyes, and generally considered good looking; has a respectable profession and good expectations—W. H. D., a young man of good family, 5 ft. 8 in. in height, twenty-one years of age, dark, and in possession of a good business.

LIZZIE by—A. U., a widower with a good business, but wants a comfortable partner to assist him—Z. Z., a gentleman—a widower—of good position—F. R. N., a gentleman about her own age—CARLOS DOSI, a widower, forty years of age, very fond of home, dark complexion, with all he can wish but a partner to cheer his lonely evenings.

LUCY ST. CLARE's candidates are—W. R., twenty-two, 5 ft. 6 in. in height, blue eyes, brown hair, dark complexion, and now serving on board H.M.S. Bellerophon, at Portsmouth, as an able seaman and seamster's grunner—CAPTAIN COOK, a sailor, twenty-three years of age, and good looking enough to pass in a crowd—J. D., thirty-two years of age, 5 ft. 8 in. in height, fair, a sailor, with sufficient income to maintain a wife highly respectably.

VIOLET has offers from—S., who is well educated, tall, rather good looking in appearance, respectably connected, in a good position, a Protestant, and seriously and religiously inclined—RUBIN, who believes he answers the description that "Violet" wishes for, would be happy to correspond with her—ARTHUR, thirty-six, 5 ft. 6 in. in height, dark, a tradesman with two businesses, flatters himself that he would suit her.

MARY ANNIE is responded to by—F. L., who is 5 ft. 8 in. in height, rather dark, considered handsome, twenty-seven years of age, and in possession of an annuity of 5000l.—SIX FOOT TON, twenty-two years old, and dark complexion, with at present 2000l. a year, and expecting a rise in salary in about three months' time, and fond of home and music.

J. G. has an offer from an IRISHMAN (Protestant), who is quite enamoured of her description. "Irishman" is twenty-nine, 6 ft. 2 in. in height, light complexion, having moustache and whiskers, possessed of 15,0000l. cash.

MIRIAM, a rough son of Neptune, desires to correspond with Bessie; he is twenty-nine years of age, and very kind in all his ways.

BEATRICK is replied to by—WESTWORTH B., twenty-four, a gentleman by birth, and an income of 2500l.—G. H. ORWELL, 5 ft. 10 in. good looking, merry disposition, and in a good business of his own.

MADLINE by—S. NEVILLE, twenty-three years of age, 5 ft. 8 in. in height, fair, good looking, fond of home, sober, and of a saving disposition, good health, easy temper, and in business for himself, which brings in 1000l. per annum, and will increase as he gets more trade—ALFRED, who is in a good position, well educated, medium height, gentlemanly, has travelled a great deal, and possessed of some means.

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